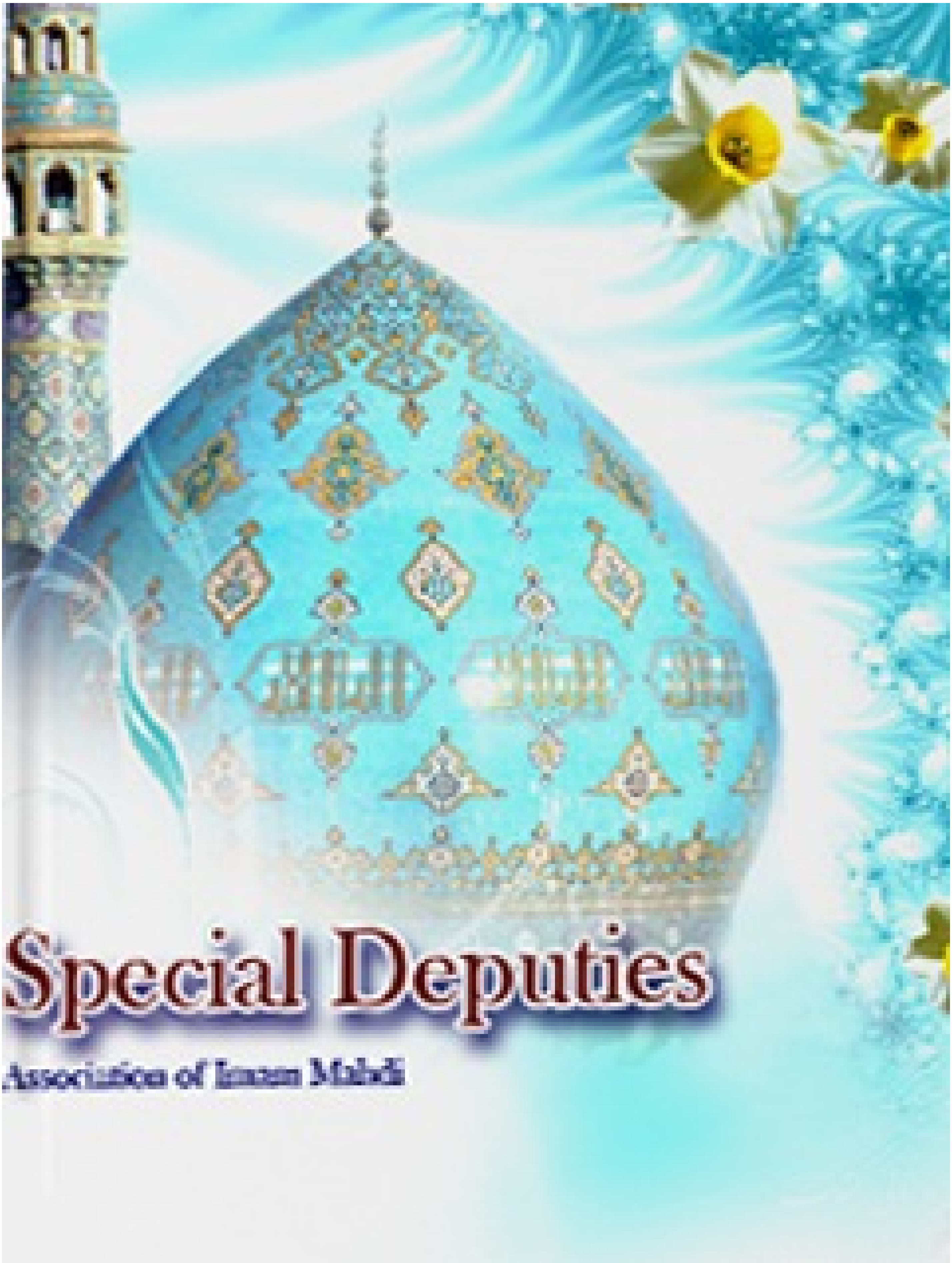

Special Deputies
Association of Imam Mahdi

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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A short biographical text detailing the lives and circumstances of the four special deputies of Imam Mahdi [ajtf] during the Minor Occultation.

Preface

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بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْکَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج) اَدْرِكْنَا

Allah's mercy is infinite. None else is more gracious than the Almighty to His creatures. Even the vast love of a mother for her child is just a minor ray of endless love which the Creator has for His creatures. When a mother can never see her offspring in any trouble, then how can the immense mercy of Allah see His creatures punished in Hell?

The Best Creation

Allah created man as his best creation. He made man the most balanced and granted him superiority over every other creation. He provided for all his requirements. He granted the power of "Freewill" to man, and also do gift him "Intelligence" so that he may use the bounty of "Freewill" most appropriately.

He gave man “Physical instincts” and also decorated him with comprehensive inclinations towards “True guidance”. As the Satan undertook the task of igniting the physical instincts, Allah set up the system of guidance through the Divine Messengers, .(.Leaders and Imams (a.s

As Allah is thoroughly acquainted with man He has made a comprehensive arrangement for his guidance right from

p: ١

the very first person who was sent on this earth as His Prophet and Guide. The people can thus never have an excuse for their deviation. One who treads the path of error .does so of his very willingness

Man is Free

Allah has created man free. Freedom is meaningful only if one has options to choose. That is, select between the good and the evil. In absence of choice when one is forced to tread a particular path, freedom becomes totally meaningless. The Holy Quran :mentions about this reality thus

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

(And We guided him to the two ways”(١“

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

(Surely We have guided him to the way either: he may be thankful or ungrateful.”(٢“

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا.

Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it; He will indeed be“ (successful who purifies it, And he will indeed fail who corrupts it.”(٣

Allah has granted man great bounties that He has not given anyone else. These are intelligence, wisdom and capacity to think. Among men are some who have been endowed with caliphate, messengership, prophethood and divine leadership. Consequently man will also be tested in the same proportion. One who succeeds in .this test will then be granted unimaginable rewards

An Examination

Bestowals are accompanied by free-will and a test. The test is followed by either a great elevation or an infinite lowliness caused by the incorrect application of one’s .free-will

Allah had granted innumerable bounties to Satan. He accorded him a high status

۱- Surah Balad (۹۰): Verse ۱۰

۲- Surah Dahr (۷۶): Verse ۳

۳- Surah Shams (۹۱): Verses ۸-۱۰

among the angels due to his excessive worship. A creature made from the fire thus moved around with creatures made from light. This enhancement of the status was followed by a test. Allah commanded him to prostrate before a creature made from .soil. The angels were the perfect servants of the Lord

They carried out His every command. Without paying attention to the earthly creature they focused on the divine command and immediately prostrated. They succeeded and were declared His nearest attendants. The Satan on the other hand focused on the apparent and ignoring the divine command refused to prostrate. Allah then expelled him from His attendance and the company of the angels. From the lofty .heights he was disgraced to the lowest of depths

At that moment the Satan exceeded all limits of decency and his misbehavior in divine :presence is recorded thus in the Holy Quran

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا لَكَ أَلاَّ تَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ. قَالَ لَمْ أَكُن لِّأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِن صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ. قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ. وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَهَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ. قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنظِرْنِى إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ. قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ. إِلَى يَوم الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُوم. قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ أَغْوَيْتَنِى لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِى الأَرْضِ وَلأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ. قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ. إِنَّ عِبَادِى لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلاَّ مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ.

He said: O Iblis! What excuses have you that you are not with those who make“ obeisance? He said: I am not such that I should make obeisance to

.a mortal whom Thou hast created of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape

He said: Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away: And surely on you is curse until the Day of Judgment. He said: My Lord! Then respite me till the time when they are raised. He said: So surely you are of the respited ones Till the period of the time made known. He said: My Lord! Because Thou hast made life evil to me, I will certainly make (evil) fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly cause them all to deviate Except Thy servants from among them, the devoted ones. He said: This is a right way with Me: Surely as regards My servants, you have no authority, over them (except those who follow you of the deviators."(١)

:In Surah Sad after recording this incident in some other words, it is mentioned that

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِکَ لَأُغْوِیَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِینَ.

(He said: Then by Thy Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all"(٢)"

The Satanic Conspiracy

These verses amply clarify that the Satan desires to deviate everyone and make .them his companions in hell

Deviating someone means to take him away from his Lord, his divine religion and his divine leaders. It implies non adherence to divine laws and considering the permitted .as prohibited and vice-versa

It leads to man's deprivation from divine guidance. Deviation entails the non-establishment of divine government in this world, preoccupation of Allah's creatures in oppression - instead of righteousness - and

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Surah Hijr (١۵): Verses ٣٢-۴٢ -١

Surah Sad (٣٨): Verse ٨٢ -٢

opposing divine commands. It is the involvement in polytheism instead of Divine Unity, denial instead of submission and hypocrisy in place of sincere belief.

Swearing on divinity itself the accursed Satan has firmly decided to misguide all men. He aims to spread deviation in every corner of the earth. Such is the scheme of Satan

The Arrangement of Allah

Consequently, Allah made a comprehensive arrangement for man's guidance. Regarding the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.), the Holy Quran declares:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا

“Say: O people! Surely I am the Apostle of Allah to you all”(1)

وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُم بِهِ وَمَن بَلَغَ

“This Quran has been revealed to me that with it I may warn you and whomsoever it reaches”(2)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds”(3)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ.

“He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He might cause it to prevail over all religions, though the polytheists may be averse.”(4)

Likewise, there are many more verses. Hence, it is clear that while the Satan desires deviation for all, Allah plans for the preeminence of the religion of Islam throughout the world. The Satan considers all means permissible for achieving his nefarious aims. Homicides, plundering, falsehood, accusations, and slander - he is capable of anything.

The Divine representative on the other hand does not budge even slightly from the boundaries of the holy law for achieving

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۱- Surah A'raaf (۷): Verse ۱۵۸

۲- Surah An'aam (۶): Verse ۱۹

۳- Surah Anbiya (۲۱): Verse ۱۰۷

۴- Surah Tauba (۹): Verse ۳۳

his divine goals. He is steadfastly attached to the divine commandments in attaining his objectives. He always maintains the highest standards of morals and ethics in all .his dealings

Thus, on one hand there are all possible modes of achieving the reprehensible intentions and on the other along with a holy aim there is also self-discipline in limiting .the means to only what has been divinely permitted

The Final Victory is for the Virtuous

In addition there is another glaring difference due to which the Divine Representative is always content even in the worst of the circumstances and the Satan and his allies are always agitated despite accessing all means to achieve their evil intentions. This :difference is in the following Quranic declaration

وَالْعَاقِبَهُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

(And the final end is for the pious"(۱"

Thus, finally success will be for those who are pious and virtuous. The outcome of the .age old battle of guidance and deviation will result in the evident victory of guidance

Apparently the Satan has got an upper hand until now. This is so because; the Divine Representatives have always invited the people towards the religion with a freedom of choice. They desire that the true religion should be accepted by all exercising their .own free-will and preference without the involvement of any force or duress

For the people to consciously choose guidance and totally hand over their emotions to the will of Allah is undoubtedly a difficult but an extremely rewarding task. If man could only fathom the greatness of this, he would certainly consider these difficulties a

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Surah A'raaf (۷): Verse ۱۲۸ -۱

.great bounty

The Absence of Compulsion

The world is a collection of causes and effects. Everything runs its own course like a seed which gradually matures into a tree. The world is not governed by miracles. If it was so none would ever be deviated. Allah has destined that man should traverse the path of guidance as well as deviation by his own intent.

Satan adopted the path of rebellion right from the beginning. If he would have felt any remorse for his action and sought forgiveness, it was possible that the merciful Lord may have excused him. Jettisoning the approach of seeking forgiveness he adopted the path of opposition and conflict. He started creating problems for the divine representatives, right from the start.

He ignited the fire of jealousy in the heart of Qaabeel provoking him to kill Haabeel. He continued his rebellious approach inciting Firaun, Hamaan, Namrud, Qarun, Abu Lahab, Abu Jahl, Akramah, Abu Sufiyan, Bani Ummayah, Bani Abbas ....and so on. All of them had a common agenda: "Extinguish the light of Allah". If the sun of guidance were to set, the darkness of misguidance would spread. The enemies of Guidance would then get a free hand to popularize deviations.

The divine representatives were one after the other killed by them. Finally the chain of divine prophets concluded in the most beloved and illustrious persona of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a).

Satan tried his level best to extinguish this illustrious light of guidance in Mecca itself. All the tribes jointly schemed

to assassinate the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). However Allah foiled all their plans. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) escaped from the devious disbelievers who had besieged him just as the moon emerges from behind the clouds. He (s.a.w.a.) had hardly settled down in Medina, that he was confronted with a series of battles. This sequence .continued till the very end of his earthly life

Bravely despite all odds the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) continued his efforts which culminated in his (s.a.w.a.) declaring the mastership and absolute leadership of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) after him (a.s.) at Ghadeer al-Khumm. This declaration marked the completion .of his efforts in the propagation of guidance

The verse of "completion of religion" in the Holy Quran is a living testimony to the fact that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) completed his job of conveying Allah's message to the people. Divine messenger-ship was now concluded. The announcement of the mastership of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), in addition to completing the religion also became a .guarantee for its protection till the day of Judgment

This announcement crushed the hopes of Satan and all the enemies of Allah and His religion. This was more severe than the announcement of prophethood as then they had hoped that with the conclusion of Holy Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) life even his message will be gradually forgotten. The proclamation of Hazrat Ali's (a.s.) leadership dashed .all their schemes

They now restlessly started awaiting the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Purposefully they ignored the clear and forceful instructions of the Holy Prophet

s.a.w.a.) for joining the army of Usama. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had informed) Hazrat Ali (a.s.) about the conspiracies which will occur after his death. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was well aware of the series of suppression that will follow the demise of the Holy .(.Prophet (s.a.w.a

The hidden hatred will manifest itself. It was however crucial to make the people submit to guidance with their own free-will. Hence forcing himself upon them was totally ruled out. The people ignoring the clear instructions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) embraced the decorated worldly pleasures offered to them by the accursed Satan. Then for the sake of these material benefits they martyred Allah's divine .proofs one after another

The Neglect of Divine Guides

For the purpose of continuing divine guidance after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) Allah had destined only ١٢ guides till the Day of Judgment. The first of whom is Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and the last is Hazrat Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). The enemies of Allah and his religion never allowed anyone of these to live freely. Allah had appointed ١٢ Imams (a.s.); however these worldly worshippers and enemies of divine light martyred eleven of them. The moment destined for the Day of Judgment was still to arrive. Hence, Allah protected .the last guiding sun from His enemies by placing him in occultation

Allah does not desire compelling in matters of religion. Also it is not His practice to use miracles every time. Hence it was necessary to protect the divine guide to exhaust the enemies and gradually prepare the people

.to support the Universal Government

:This idea can also be elaborated as follows

.Allah revealed the religion of Islam for the guidance and success of mankind .۱

He declared the Universal and Final Messenger-ship of the Holy Prophet of Islam .۲ .(.(s.a.w.a

The deputation of Prophets (a.s.) and the promulgation of divine laws were with the .۳ aim of establishing justice throughout the world so that no one is oppressed. A person does not oppress his own self by adhering to satanic ideologies or others by .oppressing them

In light of His divine wisdom Allah has made Hazrat Hujjat ibnil Hasan al-Askari .۴ (a.t.f.s.) responsible for the establishment of a system of justice by fully eradicating all :forms of oppression. Hence we find traditions mentioning about him (a.t.f.s.) thus

يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَ عَدْلاً بَعْدَ مَا مُلِئَتْ ظُلْمًا وَ جَوْرًا

He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it would be fraught with oppression and" ".tyranny

It is the divine will that the people are not forced to accept true guidance but they .۵ .accept it voluntarily

In the last ۱۴۰۰ years Allah sent ۱۲ Muhammads or ۱۲ Alis or ۱۲ Hasans or ۱۲ .۶ Husains.....for the guidance and prosperity of mankind. All of them were alike in their superiority, knowledge and understanding. They were the evident chiefs of the entire !creation. However none was given his due by the people

Had they been cared for, then during the battle of Siffeen when victory was just round the corner, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) would not have been forced to ask his commander Janab

Malik al-Ashtar (r.a.) to return. Had they been cared for, Hazart Ali (a.s.) would not have been forced to been isolated. Had they been cared for Hazrat Imam Hasan (a.s.) .would not have signed a treaty with Mu'awiyah

Had they been cared for, an incongruous person like Yazid would never become the Caliph leading to the merciless martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain (a.s.). Had they been cared for, the tyrant Haroon Rashid would never be able to arrest Hazrat Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.). Had they been cared for, Hazrat Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Hazrat Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) would not be exiled from Medina and lived under .governmental scrutiny in Samarra

Had these arks of salvation, true guides, protectors of true religion, pointers to the straight path and the equivalent of the Holy Quran been cared for, and had they been accorded the status and respect due to them by the people, the oppressors would !never have dared to execute them. But alas

Allah in the light of His divine wisdom decreed the number of guides after the Holy .٧ Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to be only twelve. Eleven of these were martyred due to the .carelessness of the people

The promise which Allah had made to His beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that He would .٨ .make his religion supreme over all others in the world was still not fulfilled

:Hence, the available options now were .٩

a. Either this last Imam (a.s.) should also be made apparent for the people to oppress him and get him martyred as they

.(.had done with the previous eleven Imams (a.s

b. Or the system of this world should be changed for the sake of this last Proof. Then if the people attack him with the sword it would cause him no harm. If he is poisoned it would be futile. If arrows are thrown towards him they will be in vain. Such a change in the universal system would render the free-will of the people ineffective is against the .practice of Allah

c. Or this last proof should be taken out of this world. Then the entire system of the world would become inside out, as the presence of a Divine Proof on the face of the .earth is a must for its continued existence

d. Or this Proof continues his abode on the earth. The Divine system will therefore be protected. The Proof lives in Occultation without being recognized by the people. He would continue to stay among the people and meet them but his identity would remain unknown to them. This arrangement should continue till the people out of their own free-will are not ready to accept his commands. This arrangement is called .(غیبت) ”“occultation

Janab Khawaja Nasir at-at-Tusi (r.a.) in his book ‘Tajrid ul-Itiqad’ mentions this reality :very subtly as follows

وُجُوْدُهُ لُطْفٌ، و تَصرُّفُهُ لُطْفٌ آخِرُ وَ غَیْبَتُهُ مِنَّا

His existence is Allah’s grace, his sovereignty is another grace and his occultation is“ ”due to us

Hence, Occultation of Hazrat Wali Asr (a.t.f.s.) was a need of the situation. Since, Allah’s knowledge is all encompassing; He knew

that a sudden occultation would put the people in doubt. Hence on account His vast mercy; He decreed the mention of Occultation along with the Imamat of the last Proof. This would ensure the acceptance of occultation by the believers. Therefore, traditions mention abundantly about his (a.s.) Imamat as well as Occultation and even .the conditions during Occultation

:These traditions also clarify the two types of Occultation

The minor Occultation and .۱

.The major Occultation .۲

The minor occultation is remembered as ‘Gaibat al-Sughra’ and the major occultation .’is called ‘Gaibat al-Kubra

The specialty of the minor occultation is that though the common people could not have direct access to the Imam (a.s.), some special deputies were appointed by Imam (a.s.) who were mediators between Imam (a.s.) and the people. A more detailed discussion about them follows in the forthcoming pages. The period of the minor .Occultation was for ۶۹ years, from ۲۶۰ A.H. till ۳۲۹ A.H

The Major Occultation started in ۳۲۹ A.H. when the last special deputy Ali ibn .Muhammad Samari (r.a.) expired, which continues till today

We sincerely pray that our good deeds contribute to the reduction in the length of .Major Occultation and Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) reappears

In this Major Occultation though Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) is hidden from our eyes but he does .neglect us. He protects us despite our deficiencies in fulfilling his rights

Hazrat (a.t.f.s.) has not left us unattended in this major Occultation. He (a.t.f.s.) has entrusted us to the religious scholars of the religion of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). This is discussed more in detail under

.”the heading “The Protectors of Wilayat

Ultimately a day will definitely come when the Major Occultation concludes. The descendent of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Hazrat Hujjat (a.t.f.s.) will reappear. Brave and sincere companions will assist him in establishing the government of Allah on this .earth. “Polytheism” will be demolished

Tyranny will finally end. Truth and Justice will be widespread. No one will have to bear even an iota of oppression. The true religion will triumph over all other religions and .school of thoughts

Centuries of efforts of Satan and his companions will become worthless. All the schemes of Satan will fail. The truth will be victorious. The Islam of Ghadeer will prevail. The Satan will finally be executed. People will then realize the true Divine .promise

”In the hope of that enlightened day whose dawn is near, tell the heart- don’t fear“

This book is a collection of articles from the previous Sha’ban issues of “Al-Qa’im: Al-Muntazar”. Though there were a number of representatives of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in the minor Occultation, only four of them were privileged with a special .(.status. These were the most reliable in front of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

They are referred to as the “Nuwwab al-Arbaa’”- The Four Special Representatives. Their brief biography are presented in this book. These highlight their pure service in the way of their master Hazrat Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and also the benevolence .(.and respect granted to them by Hazrat Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

The Major Occultation began after the demise of the fourth representative Janab

Ali ibn Muhammad as-Samari (r.a.). In the Major Occultation Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) does not have any special representative. In this period Hazrat Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has delegated this responsibility to the respected and learned "Fuqaha" and "Mujtahids". Thus, today it is our imperative responsibility to respect and honor these "Fuqaha" and "Mujtahids". The last article titled "Protectors of Wilayat" expounds this .responsibility in detail

May Allah send His vast and innumerable blessings upon the Holy Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), as only He can send. May He enumerate us among the slaves of the slaves of the Holy Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). May He grant us the great opportunity of contributing towards the .(.preparation of the reappearance of Hazrat Qa'im Ali Muhammad (a.t.f.s

The Need for Representation

point

As we are aware, occultation is of two types: the Minor Occultation and the Major .Occultation with the former being the foundation for the latter

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was martyred in ۲۶۰ A.H., within ۵ years of the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in ۲۵۵ A.H. Immediately after his martyrdom, the soldiers of the Abbassid Caliph surrounded his house. They were in search of his son, who was .his successor

These historical incidents in themselves are a proof of the danger to the life of Imam Hasan al-Askari's (a.s.) son. Occultation was thus necessary for the protection of Imam Mahdi's (a.t.f.s.) life and for the continuity of the institution of Imamat and .successorship of prophethood

:The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) had already prophesied about this

ثُمَّ يَغِيْبُ عَنْهُمْ اِمَامُهُمْ مَآ شَآءَ

الله وَ يَكُوْنُ لَه غَيْبَتَانِ...

Then till Allah desires, their Imam will be hidden from them and he will have two' (occultations...'(1)

Selection of the Special Representatives

Subsequent to the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the Shias were enveloped in the darkness of doubt and indecision. The demise of Imam (a.s.) was not the sole reason for their condition, essentially it was also due to the political situation prevailing at that time.

The atmosphere of fear and anxiety unleashed by the Abbassid Caliphs on the Shias and the lack of direct contact with the Imam (a.s.) aggravated things further. Soon the Shias disintegrated into different sects.

The martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) disturbed the Shias even more. The situation worsened to such an extent that many Shias despaired of their faith. Such conditions marked the beginning of the minor occultation. Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) was physically absent from the midst of the people.

To ensure his safety and well-being, Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) had not introduced him to everyone, but only to the innermost circle of his Shias. In the words of Shaykh Mufid (a.r.), 'To the extent that he [Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.)] had not introduced his son to a large group of his followers'.(2)

However, it was not as if Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) had not introduced his son and successor at all. The introduction was made, but only to the trustworthy ones. Ahmad b. Ishaaq al-Qummi was informed through a letter. He was instructed to inform reliable people about the birth of Imam Mahdi

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. ۵۲, Pg. ۳۸۰

2- Kitabul Irshad, pg. ۳۴۵

a.t.f.s.). Also, care was taken to ensure that this news did not break out to the general) .masses

Some Incidents

i) Some descendants of Janabe Abu Talib (a.s.) stayed in Medina. They were true) believers, having complete faith that the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) would be the twelfth Imam. However, after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) (some of them turned apostates (i.e. they turned away from Shiaism).(١

Although they were Shias of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), they deviated after the demise of Imam) ((.Hasan al-Askari (a.s

ii) Muhammad b. Ibrahim was confused after the martyrdom of the eleventh Imam) (a.s.). This was despite the fact that his father Ibrahim b. Mahziyar was a representative of Hazrat Wali al-'Asr (a.s.) in Ahwaz. Sheikh Kulaini (a.r.) narrates that when the father of Muhammad b. Ibrahim died, some amount of Khums (Sihm ul-.Imam) was in his possession

His father had mentioned in his will that he should be careful about the Sihm ul-Imam and it should reach to the correct person. In a state of confusion, Muhammad b. Ibrahim carried the money to Iraq. He decided to hand over the amount only after a .satisfying proof was presented to him

Later, a messenger came to his house and advanced some convincing signs about the money and took custody of it. Muhammad b. Ibrahim became distressed and few days had not passed when he received a letter appointing him as a representative in (his father's place.(٢

iii) Sheikh Saduq (a.r.) narrates from Abu Raje Misri, 'Two years after the demise)

(.Al-Kaafi, vol. ٢, Kitab al-Hujjah, Chapter of Birth of Sahebuz Zaman (a.t.f.s -١

Ibid., Vol.٢, Pg. ۴۵۶ -٢

of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), I undertook a journey to search for his successor but I failed in my mission. In the third year while I was still seeking Imam Hasan al-Askari's (a.s.) successor in Medina, Abu Ghanim invited me to his house one evening.

At that time, a thought crossed my mind that if at all there was any son of Imam (a.s.) then after three years he would definitely have made himself known. Suddenly a voice reached my ears, 'O Nasr b. Abdullah (Abu Raje), ask the Egyptians whether they have seen the Prophets (a.s.) in whom they believe?' Abu Raje says, 'Till then I was unaware of my father's name as I was born in Madyan and Naufali had brought me to Egypt. After my father's death I was brought up in Egypt. Listening to this I got up. Instead of going to Abu Ghanim's place I took the road to Egypt. (١)

iv) Hasan b. Abdul Majid says, 'I was in doubt about Hajiz b. Yazid (he was one of the representatives of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in Baghdad and among the foremost assistants of 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.)). Then I collected some money and reached Saamarrah. There I received a letter stating, "It is not proper to doubt about us or about those who are helpers in our affairs. Whatever you have brought with you, deposit it in the custody of Hajiz b. Yazid'. (٢)

There are many such incidents in the books of traditions. Nevertheless, such doubts and

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١- Kamaaluddin, by Shaykh Saduq, vol.٢, pg. ۴٩١, chap. ٢۵, tradition ١۵

٢- Al-Kafi, vol. ٢, Chapter of birth of Imam (a.s.)

confusions led to the disintegration of Shiaism into many sects. Al-Ma'sudi in 'Muroojuz Zahab' mentions about twenty such sects. Sa'd Qummi in 'Al Maqaalaat wal Feraq' has mentioned ١٥ such sects. While Nawbakhti in 'Firaq 'ush-Shia' and Sheikh Mufid (a.r.) in 'Fusool-ul-Mukhtaar' have named fourteen sects each. Shahrastani in .'Al Milal wa al-Nahal' has mentioned eleven sects

It is famous among the scholars that after the demise of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the Imamites (Shias) were divided into fourteen sects and according to the .contemporary ulema these ١۴ sects from the aspect of beliefs, form ۵ sects

Currently, only the Imamiyyah sect (believers in the Imamat of Imam Mahdi (a.s.)), .among all others, has survived

Reminder

We observe that despite the foresight and anticipation of the Shias of that time, they were afflicted with doubt and skepticism. Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), who never forgets :his Shias has himself declared

We are neither negligent of your affairs nor are we forgetful of your remembrance." If it was not so, calamities would have surrounded you and enemies would have ".crushed you

Surely, if it wasn't for the link between the noble and extraordinary Shias and Imam .az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), the entire foundation of Shiaism would have been decimated

To avoid such a scenario, in the initial period of occultation, Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) maintained contact with the Shias through the special representatives. The common people were thus trained to live without an apparent Imam for a long period. This .contact satisfied the people who were denied even a glance of their leader

The Important Role of the Representatives

The

leadership of the four special representatives transformed the conditions of the Shias for the better. The Shias were saved from disintegration and deviation. Of course, this .(.was possible only with the guidance of Imam az-Zaman (a.s

The era of the first representative was marked with the presence of many groups having variant views vis-a-vis the son of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). However, the era of the second representative witnessed a successful transition, as his teachings .prevailed among the Shias, thereby weakening the other groups

Consequently, at the time of the third and the fourth representatives, the new generation of Shias had become acquainted with the true Shiite beliefs. They considered the words of the special representatives as the words of Imam az-Zaman .(a.t.f.s.) himself and they were desirous of meeting him

'Same Signature in Every Tawqee

The belief of the new generation was strengthened by the presence of the same signature in all the letters issued to the four representatives. The fourth (and last) special representative was issued the last letter, which announced the termination of the minor occultation and the onset of the major occultation. The foundation of the major occultation of Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) was laid with the help of the minor .occultation

Under these circumstances the Shias were united. Shaykh Mufid (a.r.) in ۳۷۳ A.H. while writing the book, 'Al Fusool-ul-Mukhtaarah' records that out of the fourteen sects only the Imamiyyah sect survived. He further writes that this sect had the maximum number of scholars, visionaries, righteous ones, worshippers, jurists, traditionalists, .linguists and poets

As these personalities were the leaders and were highly revered in society, the Shia Imamiyyah led an honourable existence.(١)

Purpose of Representation

:Representation had two basic objectives

i) Mentally preparing the masses for the major occultation and gradually habituating them to live in the period of occultation. At the same time they had to safeguard the people from any negligence towards the matter of occultation. Had Imam (a.t.f.s.) directly gone into occultation, people would have denied his very existence and would have deviated. The special representatives of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in the minor .occultation prepared the people mentally for the major occultation

ii) Guiding the lovers and followers of Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) and protecting the unity of the Shia community. To a certain extent the special representatives filled the void created by the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.). Through them, Imam (a.t.f.s.) guided his .Shias and ensured that no adversity touched them in his absence

The deviation that would have occurred without the special representation is .unimaginable

Lastly, let us discuss some of the general responsibilities of the special :representatives

(.a) Concealing the abode of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s

This responsibility involved two facets. The dwelling of Imam (a.t.f.s.) was to be concealed not only from the enemies but also from the Shias. They prohibited their local representatives from even mentioning the name of Imam (a.t.f.s.) among the .general masses. The Shias were thus protected from the Abbassides

On the other hand they were also responsible for proving the existence of Imam (a.t.f.s.) among the reliable Shias to prevent any doubt from creeping in

۱- Peeramun Zindagi al-Nawwaab al-Khassa al-Imam al-Zaman (a.s.), p. ۸۴

their beliefs. In some instances they even arranged meetings or indicated a place for .meeting Imam (a.t.f.s.) to reliable people so as to disperse the cloud of uncertainty

We shall further enlighten our readers about the responsibilities of the special representatives in the brief life-sketch of the second representative, Janab .Muhammad b. 'Uthman Ibn Sa'eed (a.r.). Insha-Allah

:b) Preventing the disintegration among the Shias

.We have mentioned this point in some detail in the preceding paragraphs

:c) Resolving the religious and legal problems and explaining beliefs and knowledge

They were the channels for presenting religious and legal problems of the Shias before Imam (a.t.f.s.) and conveying Imam's (a.t.f.s.) reply to the people. One can find .a number of questions and their replies during the time of the second representative

:d) Contending the false claimants of Mahdaviyat

This too will be discussed Insha-Allah in detail in the life history of the second .representative

:(.e) The collection and distribution of the wealth of Imam (a.t.f.s

The special representatives collected the share of Imam (a.t.f.s.) from the Shias and their own local representatives. It was then presented to Imam (a.t.f.s.) and expended .according to his (a.s.) instructions

f) Appointing local representatives

The practice of appointing local representatives was prevalent since the time of the previous Imams (a.s.). This practice continued during the occultation of Imam Mahdi .(a.t.f.s.). The local representatives were appointed by the special representatives

Sometimes the local representatives got the opportunity to meet Imam (a.t.f.s.) along with the special representatives. Some local representatives got the honor of meeting

Imam (a.t.f.s.) once, while others

p: ۲۲

got this grace several times. The second special representative had ten local representatives in Baghdad. The highest among them was Janab Husain b. Rauh (a.r.) .who later went on to become the third special representative

.We now proceed with the details of the life histories of the special representatives

(.The first deputy – Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed al-Amri (r.a

point

Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) was the first special deputy of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) in The renowned Shiite scholar, Shaikh Muhammad b. .(غیبتِ صغری) Minor Occultation Hasan at-Tusi (r.a.) records in his illustrious book, 'Ghaibat' "Among the companions that the infallible Imams (a.s.) considered as virtuous and pious was Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed al-Amri (r.a.). Imam Ali Naqi al-Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) (have spoken highly of him and he was their most trusted companion.'(١

His Name And Title

point

Uthman was his name and his father Sa'eed. His name in Rijaal al-Kashi is recorded' as 'Hafs b. Amr', but other scholars of Ilm al-Rijaal (science of narrators of traditions) .have considered this erroneous. His name is widely recorded as 'Uthman b. Sa'eed

He has been attributed with ٢ agnomens (Kuniyyat) - Abu Amr and Abu Muhammad. He was called Abu Amr since his grandfather's name was Amr. He was called Abu .Muhammad because of his son Muhammad

In books of Rijaal and traditions he is referred to as Abu Amr. However, in Safinatul .Behar and Bihar al-Anwar, he is referred to as Abu Muhammad

.Among Shias Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) is known by four titles

(Saman / Zayyat (Oil Vendor .١

Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) took up the profession of

Ghaibat al-Shaikh at-Tusi, pg. ۳۵۳ -۱

oil-vending to camouflage his more critical duties and responsibilities of deputyship from the masses in general and the tyrant kings of Bani Abbas in particular. In this way, he protected his own life and the lives of Shias from the persecution of the Bani .Abbas

He had a very ingenious way of operating. He would collect all the money and trusts from the Shias for Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). Out of fear of the Bani Abbas caliphs, he would conceal all money and trusts in his oil barrels so as to escape the scrutiny of the common masses. In this way, he could safely courier everything to Imam Hasan (al-Askari (a.s.).(١

To keep his position of deputyship secret, he used to supply oil and other goods to the (army.(٢

Asadi .٢

.'He was a member of the Bani Asad clan and was therefore also famous as 'Asadi

al-Askari .٣

He used to reside in Samarra, in a place called 'Askar' which implies a military .cantonement

Amri .۴

Scholars are unanimous that 'Amri' was one of his titles. However, scholars of Ilme-Rijaal have given differing reasons for this title. The illustrious scholar Muhammad b. ,Hasan Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) has explained

First of all he was referred to as Amri due to his grandfather whose name was 'Amr'.' Some scholars have recorded that Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) did not like that the names 'Uthman (name of third caliph) and Abu Amr should combine in one person. (That is why he ordered 'Uthman to change his Kuniyyat from Abu Amr to Amri.(٣

(.Special Deputy of Three Imams (a.s

point

(.Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a

۱- Ghaibat al-Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.), pg. ۳۵۴

۲- Rozgar Rehai Az Kaamil al-Sulaiman, vol. ۱, pg. ۲۹۱

۳- Ghaibat al-Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.), pg. ۳۵۴

records that at the tender age of ١١ years, Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) swore allegiance to Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and commenced serving Imam (a.s.). Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) has discussed the companions of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) in detail. While mentioning about Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.), he says, "He was an oil trader famous as Abu Amr. He was an esteemed and reliable companion in the eyes of Imam (a.s.), and was also Imam's (a.s.) special deputy." The statement of Shaikh at-Tusi .(.(r.a.) makes it clear that he was deputy of three Imams (a.s

He further records that he was also a special deputy of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and enjoyed an elevated and eminent status among the Shias of that period. Likewise, Ibn Dawood al-Hilli in his Rijaal, Marhoom al-Qahyaai in his Majmaul Rijaal and Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Bahrul Uloom (r.a.) in his Rijaal have recorded this fact. This has also been mentioned in several other books of Rijaal like Tanqeehul Maqaal, Qamoos (al-Rijaal, Mojam-o-Rijaalil Hadis.(١

Note

Dr. Jasim Husain in his 'Tarikh al-Siyaasi al-Ghaibat al-Imam al-Dawazdahum (a.t.f.s.)' has reported that Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) was among the companions of Abu Ja'far al-Saani Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (a.s.). Likewise Ibn Shahr al-Aashub in 'Manaaqib al-Abi Talib (a.s.)', Shaikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) in Safinatul Behar and .Allamah al-Hilli (r.a.) have recounted this fact

Ali Ghaffarzadeh in his 'Pazoohashi Piraamun -e-Zindagani Nuwwab-e-Khaas e-Imam -e-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)' has rejected the fact that Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) .(.was the deputy of Imam Jawad (a.s

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Pazoohashi Piraamun-e-Zindagani Nuwwab-e-Khaas al-Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) by -١ Ali Ghaffarzadeh, pg. ١٠۶

He writes, ‘Anyone who is even briefly acquainted with the lives of the Imams (a.s.) will know that Hazrat ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) was (غیبتِ صـغری) and Minor Occultation not a deputy nor a companion of Imam Jawad (a.s.). This is not an established fact of ’.history and there is no chain of narration to support such an idea

After making this claim, Ali Ghaffarzadeh has outlined the names of scholars who have recorded in their books that Hazrat ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) was not a .(.companion of Imam Jawad (a.s

’i. Hajj Muhammad Ardabili (r.a.) in his book ‘Jaameul Ruwaat

’ii. Shaikh Abdullah Mamqaani (r.a.) in ‘Tanqeehul Maqaal

’iii. Allamah Shustari (r.a.) in ‘Qaamoosul Rijaal

’iv. Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Khu’i (r.a.) in ‘Mojamul Rijaal

After referring to the books of these scholars Ali Ghaffarzadeh concludes that Hazrat (‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) was not among the companions of Imam Jawad (a.s.).(١

It is possible that he did spend a few years under the Imamat of Imam Jawad (a.s.), .but may have been too young to qualify for companionship

(.His (r.a.) Status in the Words of Imams (a.s

Ahmed b. Ishaaq Qummi (r.a.) narrates, ‘I was in the presence of Imam Ali Naqi al-Hadi (a.s.). I said, ‘O my master! At times I have the good fortune of meeting you and at times I am deprived of this blessing. It is not always possible for me to be in direct contact with you. Under such circumstances, who should I contact and whose ,commands should I obey?’ Imam (a.s.) informed me

هٰذَا اَبُوْ عَمْرو الثِّقَهُ الْاَمینُ مٰا قَالَه لَکُم فَعَنّی یَقُولُهُ ،

١- Pazoohashi Piraamun, pg. ١٠-١٠٩

وَمٰا اَدّاهُ اِلَيْكَمْ فعنّى يُودِّيْهِ

'This man Abu Amr (Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.)) is a reliable and trustworthy person. Whatever he relates to you is from my side. Whatever he gives to you is from us.'(1)

Imam's (a.s.) narration in favour of Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) underlines the level of Imam's (a.s.) trust and confidence in him. Moreover, it underscores another important fact - Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) performed some critical duties i.e. to convey Imam's (a.s.) message and commands to the Shias. The duty of the Shias was to accept this communication and implement it.

After Imam Hadi's (a.s.) martyrdom, Ahmed b. Ishaaq Qummi (r.a.) once again approached Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and repeated his previous query who responded thus:

هٰذا ابوعَمرو الثقهُ الْاَمِيْنُ المَاضى وثقتِى فى المَحيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ فَمَا قَالَهُ لَكم فَعَنِّى يقُولُهُ وَمٰا اَدَّىٰ اليْكم فَعَنِّى يُودِّيْهِ

'This man Abu Amr (Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.)) is a reliable and trustworthy person. He was dependable for the previous Imam and is dependable and reliable even for me in my lifetime and even after my death. Whatever he conveys to you is from our side and everything he gives to you is from us.'(2)

Deputyship of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) appointed Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) as the first special deputy of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in the presence of ۴۰ Shias.

Some Shias like Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Malik al-Fazari, Ali b. Bilal, Ahmed b. Helal, Muhammad b. Muawiyah b. Hakeem, Hasan b. Ayyub b. Nuh have all narrated that they

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۱, pg. ۳۴۴

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۱, pg. ۳۴۴ -۲

approached Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) specifically to inquire from him about his successor. They recount, "In addition to us, there were ۴۰ other people who were .(.present with Imam (a.s

Then Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) rose and asked Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), "O son of Allah's Apostle! We wish to ask you a question of which we are sure you are ".aware." Imam (a.s.) replied, "O 'Uthman, be seated

All of a sudden the expression on Imam's (a.s.) face changed and he went out of the room after ordering us to stay in our places and not follow him outside. We did as Imam (a.s.) commanded us. After some time, Imam (a.s.) called out 'Uthman b. .Sa'eed's (r.a.) name and the latter rose

Then Imam (a.s.) said, 'Should I inform you about the reason why you all are here?' All of us said, 'O son of Allah's Apostle! Please inform us.' Imam (a.s.) revealed, 'So that you may know who is the Imam after me.' The members in the assembly replied, 'Yes. We just saw a young child whose face was beautiful like a part of the moon and '.looked very similar to you

Imam (a.s.) informed, 'After me, he is your Imam and my successor. Obey him and do not scatter in confusion about him else your religion will be destroyed. After this meeting you shall never see him again until his appointed time. That is why take .(.whatever news you get from 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a

فَهُوَ

خَلِيْفَهُ اِمَامِكُمْ وَالْاَمْرُ اِلَيْهِ

'He is the deputy of your Imam and deputyship is for him alone.'(1)

'Uthman B. Sa'eed (r.a.) – The Chief of the Deputies

Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) wrote a lenghty letter to Ishaaq b. Ismail Nishapouri, stating, 'Don't leave the city until you meet 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.). Convey to him my salaam. He is trustworthy, pious and reliable and is most proximate to us.

فكُلُّ مَايُحْمَلُ اِلَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْئٍ مِن النَّواحِى فَاِلَيْهِ يَصِيْرُ آخِرُ اَمْرِهِ لِيُوصِلَ ذٰلِكَ اِلَيْنَا

'All the wealth that is collected from various places for us, is first accumulated with 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) so that it reaches us safely.'(2)

Imam's (a.s.) letter emphasises an important point. All cities where the Shias used to inhabit had deputies. These deputies collected money by way of Khums, Zakaat, etc. from the Shias on behalf of Imam (a.s.). These deputies collectively transmitted all this money to Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.), who in turn finally submitted it to Imam (a.s.) himself.

The Religious and Political Scenario of the Time

If one casts even a cursory glance at the political and religious scenario at the time of Minor Occultation (غیبتِ صغری), he will appreciate the significance of the deputyship of Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.). The government had appointed spies in every nook and corner so as to keep a close watch on the Shias of Imam (a.t.f.s.), especially the trusted and reliable Shias who were known to be proximate to Imam (a.t.f.s.).

As if the government's persecution was not enough, the differences between the Shias and outbreak of various sects only added to the confusion. Under

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1- Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۱, pg. ۳۴۶

2- Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۰, pg. ۳۲۳

such trying circumstances, deputyship was an impossible task. However, under Imam's (a.t.f.s.) constant supervision and guidance, the Shias were rescued from the darkness of doubt and uncertainty and were steered towards the light of guidance and certainty. Being the special deputy of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), Hazrat 'Uthman b. .Sa'eed (r.a.) played a very important role in this regard

The criticality of his role can never be fully comprehended and appreciated. On the one hand, he had to unite the Shias who had split into many sects. On the other hand, he had to contend with Ja'far ibn Ali Naqi the government's candidate for the role of Shiite leadership. To challenge Ja'far was a monumental task. On the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), Ja'far usurped the mantle of Imam's (a.s.) successorship, .(.which gave him the right to lead the Shias after Imam (a.s

Shaikh Mufid (r.a.) writes in his book 'Kitabul Irshad': 'After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) when Ja'far b. Ali Naqi saw that their Imam (a.s.) did not have a successor, he usurped his (a.s.) property, imprisoned his (a.s.) maids and the women of the household and said evil things about his (a.s.) companions who were steadfast in their faith that Imam (a.s.) had a son and were waiting for his reappearance. He .threatened them but they did not pay attention to him

Finally, Ja'far approached the Caliph of the time and sought his assistance to claim the position of his brother (Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.)). He paid

a huge amount to the government by way of bribe, but failed miserably in his evil (plans.'(1)

Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) had to face the uphill task of Ja'far's claim of Imamat, his standing to lead the funeral prayers of Imam (a.s.) and creating doubts about the .(.Imamat of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

He provoked the government of the time to help him in his cause, he imprisoned the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and persecuted them and sought religious dues (khums, zakat) from the people. Under these grievous circumstances Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) with the help of Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) humiliated Ja'far and protected the status and .(.Imamat of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

When the Shias heard of Ja'far's claim and his usurping Imam's (a.s.) property and seeking help from Bani Abbas, some of them consulted Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) and requested for a 'Tawqee' from Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) to clarify the matter and remove all suspicion and doubts once and for all. Our readers should find the following .incident very interesting

Ja'far b. Ali wrote a letter to a follower of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), "I am the Imam after my brother and I have the knowledge of the permissible and the prohibited and all other sciences with me." When the companion received the letter, he became sorrowful. He took the letter to Ahmad b. Ishaaq, a close confidante of Imam Hasan .(.al-Askari (a.s

Ahmad b. Ishaaq wrote a letter to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) enclosing Ja'far's letter. .He gave it to 'Uthman b

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Kitabul Irshad, chap. ٣۴ -١

Sa'eed (a.s.) to be forwarded to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). Imam (a.t.f.s.) gave a very strong-worded reply and refuted the Imamat of Ja'far. Following is the extract of :Imam's (a.t.f.s.) letter

This defrauder (Ja'far) has falsified Allah and has claimed Imamat. We do not know' on what basis he has made such a claim. If he claims knowledge in the Ahkam and Fiqh of Allah's religion, then by Allah, he is not able to distinguish between the permissible and the prohibited. He cannot distinguish between the clear and .ambiguous verses of the Holy Quran

He is not even aware about the limits and timings of namaz. And if he is having certainty about his piety then by Allah he has forsaken namaz for forty days. His claim should be based on a miracle. Let him forward his miracle and if he has proof then he (should explain it.'(١

It was with the representation of Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) that such letters could reach Imam (a.t.f.s.) and Ja'far failed in his nefarious plans. Once in a gathering Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) said, 'The caliph (Mu'tamid al-Abbasi) thought that Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) left this world without appointing his successor and gave his inheritance to such a person (Ja'far) who did not deserve it. The followers of Imam (a.s.) were patient on it and were vacillating in a state of confusion. Nobody dared to (recognise him and help him or to convey something to him.'(٢

Hazrat 'Uthman B. Sa'eed (r.a.) In Baghdad

After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), the

Pazoohashi Piraamun, pg. ١٢٨, narrating from Ehtejaaj al-Tabarsi, vol. ٢, pg. ۴۶٨ -١

Usule Kafi, vol.٢, pg. ١٢١, Persian edition -٢

first representative of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) came to Baghdad from Samarrah on the order of Imam (a.s.). The reason being that the government vigilance and control in Samarrah was very strict and it had relatively ignored Baghdad. Samarrah was the .capital of the Abbasi government

Mu'tamid was appointed as ruler on ١٢th Rajab, ٢٥۶ A.H. Till the end of his rule, Samarrah remained the capital. In ٢٧٩ A.H., the capital was shifted to Baghdad. Till .that time Baghdad was the Shiite center

The migration to Baghdad helped Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) to keep in touch with the Shias residing in different places. In this way, his activities spread to different areas and were not restricted only to Baghdad. If he was in Samarrah or if Baghdad (had been the capital of the Abbasides, then this would have been very difficult.(١

His (r.a.) Mode of Operation

Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) had appointed some agents in Baghdad who used to coordinate with the other agents of Iraq and other areas. People met these agents in Baghdad, who collected the wealth and accepted the letters and queries from the Shias and forwarded them to Hazrat 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) and he in turn forwarded (.the same to Imam (a.s

Hajiz bin b. Yazid al-Washsha, Ahmed b. Ishaaq Ashari, Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Ja'far Qattaan and Ahmad b. Ishaaq Qummi were initially the representatives of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) in Qum, Iran. After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari .(a.s.) they returned to Baghdad as helpers of Hazrat 'Uthman b

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Pazoohashi Piramun, Pg. ١٣٠ -١

.(.Sa’eed (r.a

Muhammad b. Ahmad Qattaan had taken up the work of selling clothes so that nobody could cast any doubt on his real purpose. The other agents delivered the letters and wealth wrapped in a cloth to him and he forwarded it to Hazrat ‘Uthman b. .(.Sa’eed (r.a

History is replete with such incidents wherein the special representatives employed such ingenious methods to protect Imam (a.t.f.s.) and his Shias. The wealth used to .reach Imam (a.t.f.s.) without anybody learning about his (a.t.f.s.) actual abode

His (r.a.) Demise

The duration of his deputyship and the exact date of his demise has not got wide coverage in books of history and traditions. But it is clear that the combined duration of his own deputyship and that of his son Hazrat Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) was ۴۵ .years

Janabe Bahrul ‘Uloom (r.a.) has recorded that Hazrat ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) expired .in ۲۶۴ A.H. or ۲۶۵ A.H

Ali Ghaffarzadeh in his book has narrated from historians and scholars that the death (of Hazrat ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) took place before ۲۶۷ A.H.(۱

His Grave

(He is buried near western Baghdad inside Shaare Maidan in Masjid Zarab.(۲

Today there is market near his grave and one has to pass through several small lanes to reach the grave. Due to this, some visitors (Zaaireen) avoid going for his ziyarat. His ziyarat has a lot of merit and is similar to meeting him when one comes to meet Imam .(a.t.f.s.), as he was Imam’s (a.t.f.s.) deputy

Obituary

,(.After the demise of Hazrat ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a

Pazoohashi Piramun, pg. ۱۴۴ -۱

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۱, pg. ۳۴۷ -۲

:Imam (a.t.f.s.) wrote a condolence letter to his son, Muhammad

Surely we are from Allah and we will return to Him. We submit ourselves to His“ command. Your father devoted his entire life to goodness and right till the end. He was praiseworthy. May Allah have mercy on him and include him with His friends and the Imams (a.s.). He continuously endeavoured and struggled in the affairs of his Imams (a.s.) till he met Allah, the High, and the Imams (a.s.). May Allah make his face (contented and happy.’(١

(.The Second Special Deputy Muhammad B. ‘Uthman B. Sa’eed Amri (r.a

point

:Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) declares

اَلْعَمْرِیّ وَابْنُه ثِقَتَانِ فَمَا اَدَّيَا اِلَيْکَ فَعَنِّی يُوَدِّيَانِ...

Amri (‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.)) and his son (Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.)) are both‘ reliable and trustworthy (in narration). Whatever they both convey to you they convey (from us.’(٢

,Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) reiterates

لَمْ يَزَلْ ثِقَتُنَا فِی حَيَاهِ الْاَبِ- رضی الله عنه-

He is for us, trustworthy and reliable, from the time of his father (‘Uthman b. Sa’eed‘ ((r.a.))’(٣

Our salutations to that great personality, who is considered as trustworthy and .(.reliable by two infallible Imams (a.s

We bear witness, O Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) (during the period of Minor you were the door to reach Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and that ((غيبت صغری) Occultation you accomplished this responsibility in the most excellent manner, and that you were a trustworthy representative. And we bear witness that Allah chose you for this .deputyship with His Light

In the backdrop of this information, we shall now learn more about this esteemed .personality

Name, Title And Agnomen

His name is Muhammad and his

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥١, pg. ٣٤٩ -١

by Syed Muhammad al-Sadr p. ۴٠٣ (غیبت صغری) Tarikhe Minor Occultation -٢

by Syed Muhammad Sadr p. ۴٠٣ (غیبت صغری) Tarikhe Minor Occultation -٣

father's name is 'Uthman and his grandfather's name is Sa'eed. His grandfather was from Amr, hence Amri is added to his name and he is known as Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Sa'eed Amri. His agnomen (Kuniyyat) is Abu Ja'far and no other agnomen is found in the books other than this. His titles are Amri, Asadi, Kufi, Sammaan and al-Askari.

Opinions of Scholars

We have already gauged his importance in the beginning through the sayings of the guided Imams (a.s.). Hereunder are the opinions of some scholars:

Shaykh at-Tusi (r.a.) writes in his book of Rejaal, "'Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Sa'eed Amri (r.a.), his agnomen is Abu Ja'far and that of his father is Abu Amr. Both of them were the representatives of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and had an esteemed position among the Imamite Shiites."(١)

A similar narration is recorded by Allama al-Hilli (r.a.) in his book on Rejaal, Part ١, under the alphabet of meem, no ٥٧.

Marhoom Maamqaani (r.a.) records in his book Tanqeehul Maqaal - 'The great position and high status of this man (Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.)) is renowned and does not warrant any explanation and proof. While studying the conditions of the life of his father it becomes evident that he (Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.)) during the life of his father itself had received the testimonial of being the representative of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) after his father.'

Marhoom Maamqaani (r.a.) has narrated the above with references from Bihar al-Anwar of Allama Majlisi (r.a.) Ayatullah al-Uzma Sayyid Abul Qasim Al-Khu'i (r.a.) writes in his

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١- Rejaal at-Tusi, No. ١٠١ p. ٥٠٩

book Mojamul Rejaal

وَالرِّوَايَاتُ فِی جَلَالَتِه وَعَظَمَهِ مَقَامِه مُتَاظَفِرَهٌ

The traditions that have been narrated regarding the majesty and greatness of his‘ ’.position are numerous

Some scholars of Rejaal have also called him as a compiler and author. Hence a :famous saying is narrated as follows

Ibn Nuh (Abul Abbas Ahmad b. Ali b. Nuh Sairafi) says: Abu Nasr Hebatullah, maternal grandson of Umm Kulthum, daughter of Abu Ja’far (Umm Kulthum was the daughter of Muhammad b. ‘Uthman and Abu Nasr Hebatullah was the maternal grandson of Umm Kulthum) says that Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. ‘Uthman has written books on Fiqh in which he has collected all the traditions from Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.), Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) and from his father ‘Uthman b. Sa’eed (r.a.) who in turn has narrated from Imam Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). Among these books is one titled Al Ashrebah. Umm Kulthum daughter of Abu Ja’far (r.a.) narrates, ‘This book as per the will of Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) had reached to the third deputy Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Abu Nasr says, ‘I assume that after Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), it must have (been passed on to the fourth deputy Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.).(١

The late Ayatullah Uzma Aqae Al Khu’i (r.a.) in his book Mojamur Rejaal writes after ,this narration, ‘This narration proves two things

.i) Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) is an author of books

ii) He has narrated traditions from Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and Imam az-Zaman .(.(a.t.f.s

Refuge of Shias

When we look at the conditions

Al Ghaibat of Shaikhe at-at-Tusi p. ٣۶٣ -١

of the life of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and study the traditions and Imam's (a.t.f.s.) letters (tawqeeaat) that have reached us through him, it is evident that his representatives across several cities were referring to him for matters related to jurisprudence, theology (kalaam) and society and he used to solve them. We narrate :an incident in this regard

Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmad al-Dallal al-Qummi narrates: 'Among the Shias there was a difference of opinion on whether Allah has delegated creation and distribution of .(.sustenance to the Imams (a.s

One group argued that this is impossible because no one can create the bodies except Allah, while the other group believed that Allah has delegated the power of creation and distribution of sustenance to the Imams (a.s.) and therefore they can create and .provide sustenance. This disparity intensified with every passing day

Finally someone suggested: 'Why don't you refer the matter to Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Uthman Amri (r.a.) so that he clarifies the truth for you? He is the representative of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.).' Everybody agreed. The query was written and delivered to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). He referred the matter to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). In :reply, he received a Tawqee wherein Imam (a.t.f.s.) had written

Undoubtedly only Allah creates the bodies and distributes the sustenance. He neither' has a body nor does He assume any form and there is none like Him. He is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing and the infallible Imams (a.s.) seek from Him and He Himself creates. They

request Him and He accepts their request and to honour and elevate them He .’delegates to them the power to create and sustain

The period of Muhammad b. ‘Uthman’s (r.a.) deputyship was quite lengthy and as we have already mentioned that in this period, he served as a sanctuary for the Shias. He solved numerous issues related to jurisprudence, society and belief. During his deputyship all that has been received by him from Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) in the form of Tawqeeaat is present in different books under different topics. However, there are some books dedicated to the Tawqeeaat and one can find them all in one .place

We have reproduced below a part of an important Tawqee received by Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) from Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) which was addressed to Ishaq b. Yaqub :in reply to various questions put forth by him

Ishaq b. Yaqub says that this Tawqee has been written by the blessed hand of my :master Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and is as follows

May Allah guide you and keep you steadfast upon the true beliefs. As for your‘ concern that some of my relatives and paternal uncles and cousins have denied my existence, know that Allah does not recognise relations with anyone (when it comes to believing in us) and the one who denies us is not from us. The path that he is treading is the path of the son of Nuh (a.s.). And my paternal uncle Ja’far and his sons have chosen the path of the brothers of

’.(.Yusuf (a.s

Other Topics in this Tawqee Include

As for fuqaa’ (alcohol from barley) it is prohibited but there is no harm in drinking‘ ’.(shalmaab (shalmaab is made from sheelam which resembles barley

And as for that wealth which you send us as gifts, we accept them in order that your‘ sins are forgiven. Therefore there are those who wish to send us gifts while others ’.don’t know that whatever Allah has given us is better than what you give

None knows the time of reappearance.’ In the same Tauqee’ Imam (a.t.f.s.) adds:‘ ‘The time of my reappearance is linked to Allah’s wish. Whoever fixes a time for ’.reappearance is a liar

Guidance

And when you come across any new issues then refer to the narrators of our‘ ’.traditions because they are our proofs upon you and I am the Proof of Allah

Thereafter, Imam (a.s.) has emphasised on numerous issues like the reliability of Muhammad Ibn ‘Uthman Amri (r.a.), a supplication for the hearts satisfaction and dispelling the doubts of Ali Ibn Mahziyaar Ahwaazi, the illegitimacy of wealth of singing women, enumeration of Muhammad Ibn Shazaan Ibn Naeem Neshapuri among the lovers of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), cursing Abul Khattab Muhammad Ibn Abi Zainab .and his followers, etc

Improper Use of Sihm ul–Imam

,On this topic Imam (a.t.f.s.) warns

And as for those who keep our wealth with them, and if they consider some part of it‘ permissible for themselves and they spend it, then it is as if they have taken fire into ’...their bellies

Reason for Occultation

And as for the reason for occultation Allah, the Almighty, cautions in'

:the Holy Quran

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لاَ تَسْئَلُوْا عَنْ اَشْيَآءَ اِنْ تُبْدَلَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ

O you who believe! Do not question about things which if declared to you, may' (trouble you.'(١

Imam az–Zaman (a.t.f.s.) Will not pay Allegiance to Anyone

:In the same Tawqee' Imam (a.t.f.s.) informs

My forefathers (a.s.) have lived their lives under the tyrannical reign of despots.' '...However, I shall reappear at a time when there shall be no allegiance upon me

He further explains that people can benefit from his existence in occultation just as .they benefit from the sun when it goes behind the clouds

This Tawqee' has been recorded by Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) in his book Kamaaluddin vol. ٢ p. ۴٨٣, tradition ۴ and by Allama al-Majlisi (r.a.) in Bihar al-Anwar vol ۵٣ p. ١٨٠ tradition .١٠

Similarly there are many such Tawqee'aat that have been conveyed by Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) for his Shias through Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). Some other :personalities who have been sent Tauqee'aat by Imam (a.t.f.s.) as are follows

Abul Hasan Muhammad b. Ja'far Asadi

He was the representative of Janab Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) in the city of Rayy (near Tehran). He expired in Rabius Saani ٣١٢ A.H. It was about him that it was said in the Tauqee', "Keep up prayer (Namaz) as you are the one who asked about the timing .of Namaz during the rising and setting of the sun

It is as the people say that the sun rises from between the two horns of Satan and also sets between his two horns. That is why there is nothing better than Namaz if one wants to rub Satan's nose

(in dust. So keep up prayer and put Satan's nose in dust (i.e. humiliate him)."(1)

End of Dispute Between Husband and Wife

Before mentioning this Tawqee' it will be in order to first review its practical aspect. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and the infallible Imams (a.s.) are the fathers of the Islamic nation. In this regard we have outlined earlier that Allah, the Almighty, due to their honour and respect has blessed them with great powers.

They have been delegated the task of distributing sustenance to the creation. This implies that whatever they desire from Allah, He grants them. They are the ones through whom difficulties are relieved and calamities are repelled. In this Tauqee', this particular point has been highlighted.

Abu Ghalib Ahmed b. Muhammad Zorari says: 'There arose serious differences between me and my wife. This resulted in a lot of hostility between us and reconciliation was almost ruled out. Due to the nature of this problem, I was under a lot of stress. So I wrote a letter and gave it to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) to present it in the service of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). In this letter I had requested Imam (a.t.f.s.) to pray for me. It was quite some time since I had sent the letter and there was no reply.

One day when I met Abu Ja'far (Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.)) he told me, 'The reply of your letter has come.' I went to his house. He took out a register and flipped through its pages and finally took out a letter

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1- Kamaaluddin vol. ۲ p. ۵۲۰, tradition ۴۹

from it. He gave it to me. In it was written: And as for the query regarding the problem between the husband and wife, know that Allah has decreed peace and reconciliation .between them

Abu Ghalib Zorari says, "Earlier my wife always behaved harshly with me. But after this event there were no problems and differences. In fact sometimes I intentionally did certain things just to irritate her but she did not react."(۱)

Note

In all problems and difficulties we should approach the door of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). In this era, that door of access is Imam az-Zaman (a.s.). He is Allah's Gate (Babullah) and :hence we send salutation upon him in the Ziyarat

اَلسَّلامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بَابَ اللهِ

Peace be upon you O Allah's Door

Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and False Claimants

Due to the restrictive and sensitive conditions prevalent in their times, Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) attended public gatherings sparingly and cautiously. Therefore, they had appointed special representatives so that they could .maintain contact with the general people through them

Another rationale behind the practice of representation was to acquaint the Shias with this method and prepare the ground for the minor occultation (غیبت صغری) when this practice was to gain prominence. Finally the people were accustomed to this method and after the onset of Minor Occultation (غیبت صغری); they regularly sent their letters to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) through the special deputies and got their replies in .the same way

During this period some selfish and opportunistic people tried to take advantage of this and claimed

Pazohashi Payramune Zindagaaniye Nawwaabe Khaase Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) - ١

p. ١٧۶

to be the deputy of Sahib ul-'Amr (Master Of the Affair), Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). We mention below the names of those imposters who advanced such claims during the deputyship of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.):

١. Abu Muhammad Hasan Shariee.

٢. Muhammad b. Naseer Numairy.

٣. Ahmad b. Halal Abartaee.

۴. Abu Tahir Muhammad b. Ali b. Bilal.

۵. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ahmed b. 'Uthman popular as Abu Bakr Baghdadi. He was the nephew of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.)

۶. Ishaq b. Ahmed.

٧. Baaqataani

٨. Husain b. Mansoor al-Hallaj.

It is noteworthy that all of them rivaled Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and refuted his deputyship. Their beliefs were distorted and their faith was weak. They were declared as fanatical and wretched during the period of Imam Hadi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) itself.

By this we can easily gauge the extent of their jealousy towards Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and the problems they posed in his working. But Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) dealt with them all with the help of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and fulfilled all his duties.

Why Did People trust Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.)?

During Muhammad b. 'Uthman's (r.a.) period, the false claimants wanted to deceive the people and desired to usurp the religious dues (Khums, Zakaat) from them. They nearly injured Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). It was a difficult trial for the people in that era to recognise the true deputy of Imam (a.t.f.s.). Under such circumstances to win the confidence of the people and overcome the enemies was a gigantic task.

The people reposed their confidence in Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) due to various reasons. The most important among them were those

p: ۴۴

Tawqeeaat, which were sent by Imam (a.t.f.s.) to him. Not only did they contain the replies to various social and religious problems, but also information about some hidden affairs which acted as a compelling argument for the people to accept his deputyship. There are many incidents wherein news of hidden affairs was given by :Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). We narrate one such incident hereunder

News of the Unseen

Ja'far b. Muhammad Matteel narrates that Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Uthman Samman (r.a.), who was famous as Amr, called me and gave me some pieces of cloth .and a purse containing some dinars

He told me that it is necessary that I immediately go to Wasit (a place between Kufa and Basra) and hand over this property to the first person I meet proceeding towards Shatta. I felt aggrieved at the thought that a (honourable) person like me has been .chosen for this petty assignment

Anyway, I mounted my horse and proceeded towards Wasit. I asked the first person I met about the conditions of Hasan b. Muhammad Quttat Saidalaani who was the representative in Wasit. He replied, 'I am Hasan b. Muhammad, who are you?' I replied, 'I am Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Matteel.' He recognised me and we exchanged salutations. I told him that Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) has conveyed .salutations to you and sent these pieces of cloth and purse for you

He said, 'All Praise is for Allah! Since Muhammad b. Abdullah Aameri has died, I am on my way

to arrange for his shroud (kafan). When we opened the purse there was money in it for the burial expenses. I took part in the burial and returned home."(1)

If Imam az-Zaman (a.s.) had not informed Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) about such incidents, he would not have had knowledge about them.

When we read the life sketches of the deputies, we find many such episodes wherein Imam (a.t.f.s.) has informed them about future events of which none else had the faintest inkling.

For details, readers may refer to the book of Kamaaluddin of Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) and Bihar al-Anwar of Allamah Majlisi (r.a.).

Traditions Narrated by Muhammad B. 'Uthman (r.a.)

The Tauqee'aat addressed by Imam (a.t.f.s.) to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) are still found among the people in the form of traditions. However, we have taken this opportunity to narrate some traditions in this regard.

The reason being that some scholars of Rejaal have not included him among the narrators of traditions from Imams (a.s.) and some of our scholars have also objected to the fact that he was not considered as a narrator of traditions. Without delving too much on this dispute, we shall proceed to narrate some traditions narrated by him:

1) Muhammad b. Hammam says, "I heard from Muhammad b. 'Uthman Amri, 'I have received a Tauqee' from the pure personality (Imam (a.t.f.s.)) in a script (handwriting) which I recognise i.e. in the writing of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and it was written in that:

مَنْ سَمَّانِی فِیْ مَجْمَعٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ بِاِسْمِی فَعَلَیْهِ لَعْنَهُ اللهِ

'May Allah curse the one who calls

1- Kamaaluddin p. ۵۰۴, chap of Tauqee'aat, Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۱ p. ۳۳۶

’.me by my name in any assembly or gathering

Abu Ali Muhammad b. Hammam says that I wrote a letter to Imam (a.t.f.s.) enquiring ,about the time of his reappearance. He (a.t.f.s.) informed

كَذِبَ الوَقَّاتُوْنَ

(Those who fix the time of my reappearance are liars.’(١‘

Note

Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself has explained the rationale behind the prohibition of uttering his :(a.t.f.s.) name in public

إِمَّا السُّكُوْتَ وَالجَنَّهَ، وَإمَّا الْكَلَامَ وَالنَّارَ، فَإِنَّهُمْ إِنْ وَقَفُوْا عَلَى الْإِسْمِ اَذَاعُوهُ وَإِنْ وَقَفُوْا عَلَى الْمَكانِ دَلُّوْ عَلَيْهِ-

or one should refrain from taking the name so that he may become deserving of...‘ heaven or he should talk (about him) so that he is put in hell because those who are aware of his name will spread it and if they become aware of his residence, then they (will inform the people.’(٢

The author of Wasa’il ush-Shia (Shaikh Hurr al-Ameli (r.a.)) has mentioned in vol. ١۶, p. ٢۴٠, chap. ٣٣, tradition ٢١,۴۶٠ that the reason for prohibition of taking the name was .due to dissimulation (taqayyah) and fear of enemies

Abdullah b. Ja’far Himyari says that I told Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.), ‘I wish to (٢ :ask you the same question that Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) asked Allah and said

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ رَبِّ اَرِنِيْ كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ اَوَلَمْ تُو􏰀مِنْ قَالَ : بَلَى وَلَكِنْ لِيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِيْ.

And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead. He said, ‘What! And do you not believe?’ He replied, ‘Yes (I believe), but (I ask) that my heart (may be at ease.’(٣

Please inform me‘

۱- Kamaaluddin vol. ۲ p. ۴۸۶ tradition no ۳, Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۱ p.۳۳

۲- Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۱ p. ۳۵۱

۳- Surah Baqarah : ۲۶۰

whether you have seen Sahib ul-‘Amr (Master of the Affair)? Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) replied, ‘Yes and his neck is like this and he pointed towards his own neck with his (hand.’(١)

(.Abdullah b. Ja’far Himyari narrates that I heard from Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a (٣

وَاللهِ اِنَّ صَاحِبَ هٰذَا الاَمرِ لَيَحْضُرُ الْمُوسِمَ كُلَّ سَنَةٍ فَيَرَى النَّاسَ وَيَعْرِفُهُمْ وَيَرَوْنَهُ وَلَا يَعْرِفُوْنَهُ.

I swear by Allah that Sahib ul-’Amr (a.t.f.s.) visits Mecca every year (at the time of‘ Hajj). He sees the people and recognises them and the people also see him but do not ’.recognise him

Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) witnessed Imam (a.t.f.s.) in Masjidul Haram near the :Ka’ba praying

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْجِزْلِی مَا وَعَدْتَنِی

(O Allah! Fulfill the promise that You have made unto me.’(٢‘

He also narrates the following tradition: I saw Imam (a.t.f.s.) near Babul Mustajaar clutching the cloth of Kaaba, beseeching Allah

اَللّٰهُمَّ انتَقِمْ لِی مِنْ اَعْدَائی [اَوْ اَعْدَائِکَ]

(O my Lord, let me take revenge from my enemies (or Your enemies).’(٣‘

Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) is awaiting Allah’s permission for his reappearance and is vehemently praying for it. We too should always pray for his reappearance, especially at those sanctified places where supplications are accepted like at the time of Hajj at .Al Mustajaar

Dua as-Samaat

The famous Dua as-Samaat has been communicated to the Shias through Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) This supplication is recorded in Mafaateehul Jinaan. It is also called as Dua al-Shabboor and is recommended to be recited in the late evening .(Asr) of Friday

,Shaikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) has reported this supplication from old

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Kamaaluddin, Chapter ۱ - Those who have witnessed Qaem (a.t.f.s.) tradition ۳ -۱

Ibid. tradition ۹ -۲

Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۲, p. ۳۰ -۳

authentic and reliable sources. This supplication has also been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.). Allama Majlisi (r.a.) has narrated .this supplication in Bihar al-Anwar along with its interpretation

Caliphs of Bani Abbas

Following is the list of Bani Abbas caliphs who ruled during the deputyship of :(.Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a

(.Mu'tamid Billah (۲۵۶ A.H. – ۲۷۹ A.H .۱

(.Mu'tazid Billah (۲۷۹ A.H. – ۲۸۹ A.H .۲

(.Muktafi Billah (۲۸۹ A.H. – ۲۹۵ A.H .۳

(.Muqtadir Billah (۲۹۵ A.H. – ۳۲۰ A.H .۴

Duration of Representation

It is famous among the scholars of Rejaal that the period of Muhammad b. 'Uthman's (r.a.) representation lasted for approximately ۵۰ years, although this seems improbable. The reason being that Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) died in ۳۰۵ A.H., ۴۵ .(.years after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s

The period of the minor occultation begins after the demise of Imam Hasan Askair (a.s.) i.e. ۲۶۰ A.H. After Imam Hasan al-Askari's (a.s.) martyrdom, 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) assumed deputyship for ۵ years, until his expiry. Therefore the actual period of .Muhammad b. 'Uthman's (r.a.) deputyship works out to forty (۴۰) years

Death

As per the available records, Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) died in Jamadiul Ulaa ۳۰۵ A.H. Some writers have also mentioned it in ۳۰۴ A.H. Abu Ghalib Zorari, who was the representative of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) in Kufa and was also very close to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) has recorded his death in ۳۰۵ A.H. The scholars of research have .given precedence to this narration

Muhammad b. ‘Uthman had himself informed about his death two months in advance.

Abul Hasan

p: ۴۹

Ali b. Ahmed al-Dallal Qummi narrates, 'One day I was with Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and saw a slate in front of him, on which he was making some sketches and writing the verses of the Holy Quran. And in the margins of that tablet, he was writing the names of the Holy Imams (a.s.). I asked him about it. He replied, 'This is for my grave and I will be kept on this" or according to another report, he said, "This will be ."my pillow

Then he revealed, 'Everyday I enter my grave, pray one part of the Quran and then I come out.' In another tradition, it is narrated that after this Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmed says that Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) caught my hand and took me near his grave. After looking at it he said, 'On such and such date of such and such month of such and such year, I will die and be laid in this grave and this tablet will be with me.' I remembered his words and waited for that time. Just after a few days he became sick and finally expired on the same day, month and year which he had prophesied to me (and was buried in the same grave which he had shown.'(١

A similar tradition has also been narrated by Muhammad b. Ali b. Aswadi Qummi. For details, please refer Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥١, p. ٣٥١; Kamaaluddin, vol. ٢, p. ٥٠٢, tradition .٢٩

Visitation of His Grave

Those whose hearts have been sealed

Tarikhe Siyaasie Ghaibate Imam al-Dawaazdahum, p.١٧٠ -١

will not recognise Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.), much less his deputies. In order to break open the seal of the hearts, one should go to the grave of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and see that even today this grave is informing us of his representation and deputyship. His grave is situated in East Baghdad in a very clean, posh and populated area in a mosque, famous as Khallani. Till date Shias visit his shrine and recite his Ziarat:

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّکَ بَابُ الْمَوْلَی ...جِئْتُکَ عَارِفًا بِالْحَقِّ الَّذِیْ اَنْتَ عَلَیْهِ وَاَنَّکَ مَا خُنْتَ فِی التَّادِیَهِ وَالسِّفَارهِ- اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَیْکَ مِنْ بَابٍ مَا اَوْسَعَهُ ...

I bear witness that you are the door of mercy of my Master .... I have come to you' after recognising your right on which you remained firmly established and I know that you have not breached the trust reposed in your deputyship or in conveying the news. Peace be upon you O the most expansive door of mercy!(١)

The Third Special Deputy: Husain B. Rauh Nawbakhti (r.a.)

point

Name : Husain

Agnomen : Abul Qasim

Father's Name : Rauh

Grandfather's Name : Abu Ja'far

Family : Nawbakht

He was known by his name - Husain b. Rauh al-Nawbakhti (r.a.). His exact date of birth has not been recorded in books of history.

Genealogy

Historians have recorded that after Abu Suhail Ismail b. Ali, Husain b. Rauh b. Abi Bahr was the most famous personality in the Nawbakhti family. The cause and reason of his fame and recognition was attributed to his religious position. He is counted amongst the four special deputies of Imam Qa'im (a.s.).(٢)

Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) in his book Rejaal has not made any mention of

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۱- Mafatihul Jinaan translated by Allama Jawadi (r.a.), p. ۸۹۷

۲- - Pazhoshee al-Peeramoon, Zindagaani - e - Nawaab - e - Khaas - e - Imam - e Zamana (a.t.f.s.), pg ۲۳۳

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Early Islamic scholars seem to have taken a cue from Shaikh and have not shed light on the life of Husain b Rauh (r.a.). Scholars of the present era have only mentioned his name. However, in his book Al Ghaibat, Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) has .narrated many traditions regarding him, highlighting the various aspects of his life

Ibn Shahr al-Aashob (r.a.) has included Husain b Rauh (r.a.) amongst the close (companions of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.)(١

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) During the Period of the ٢nd Special Deputy

point

According to popular narrations, he was amongst the companions of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) and was considered amongst the close companions and supporters of the ٢nd special deputy Janabe Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) enjoyed the unequivocal confidence of the second deputy so much so that the latter divided the chiefs of the Imamia sects into various levels and grades and appointed Husain b Rauh (r.a.) at the highest and the foremost group. He was the first amongst the chiefs .(who was permitted to directly meet him (٢nd deputy

Note

A critical aspect of the lives of the deputies of Imam (a.t.f.s.) is underscored in the above discussion. They were special Shias who performed their administrative duties in an extraordinary manner. Although they were in close contact with Imam (a.t.f.s.) and knew his residence, they ensured that it remained a secret from the prying eyes .of others around them

This trait is even commendable when we consider that the period of short occultation was not a period of

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Zindagaani al-Nuwaab al-Khaas al-Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), pg. ٢٣٤ sourced from -١ Manaqeb, pg. ٤٢٣

or ۲ years, but a long era spanning more than ۷ decades. Over this prolonged ۱ duration, to keep constant touch and contact with Imam (a.s.) and at the same time to regularly communicate the problems of the people to Imam (a.s.) and seek a solution .from him (a.t.f.s.) underlines their capabilities

They had to deal with constant requests and pressures from the people for being allowed to meet Imam (a.t.f.s.) and they had to all along be careful never to disclose .Imam's (a.t.f.s.) location to the people

The readers will appreciate the fact that if we try to conceal something, while the people are aware that we are trying to hide something from them, and we are also aware that people are trying to discover the hidden thing, then it is indeed a difficult task to conceal that hidden object from the inquisitive eyes of the people. It may be possible to divert their attention and delay the matter for a few days, but certainly not for a year or years or decades. These points will help us appreciate how well Imam .(a.t.f.s.) must have trained the deputies

Muhammad b. 'Uthman (a.r.) had made Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) a link between himself and the agents around Baghdad. During this period, Husain b Rauh (r.a.) came to establish an influential presence in the court of the Bani Abbas rulers by virtue of a pre-determined plan. Consequently he even succeeded in solving some problems prevailing in the government. Readers are requested to

:read the following incident carefully

Shaikh Sadooq (a.r.) has narrated from Abu Muhammad Hasan b. Hasan b. Yahya .١ Alawi that Abul Hasan Ali b. Ahmed b. Ali Aqiqi in the year ٢٩٨ A.H. came to meet Ali b. Esa b. Jarrah who was the vizier at that time, so that he could advise him regarding his .government and to advance his needs to him

The vizier replied, 'You have many relatives in this city and if all of them start asking their needs and if we decide to entertain all of them, then it will become a huge task and we will never be able to resolve this matter.' Aqiqi replied, 'Therefore I am asking '.my need from the One through whom difficulties are solved

Ali b. Esa queried, 'Who is he?' He replied, 'Allah, the Almighty.' With this he went out of the room angrily. Aqiqi used to say, 'I came out angrily and was saying, 'Allah, the Lord of the Universe, gives patience on every destruction and solves every difficulty.' .Uttering this statement I left from there

Then a messenger from Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) came to me with a message from him. I complained to him about the vizier and he in turn narrated my complaint about the vizier to Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). That messenger returned and gave me ١٠٠ dirhams. I counted all of them and weighed them. He also gave me a handkerchief and some quantity of Hunoot (camphor) and a few shrouds and

declared, ‘Your master has conveyed salutations to you and said that whenever any difficulty or sorrow befalls you then at that time wipe this handkerchief over your .face

This is your master’s handkerchief. Take this money, camphor and shroud along with you and know that tonight your wishes will be fulfilled’ He also said, ‘When you reach Egypt, Muhammad b. Ismail will die ١٠ days before you and then after ١٠ days, even ’.you will leave this world. This shroud and camphor are for you

I took it from the messenger and he left. At that moment, all of a sudden, I saw myself at the doorsteps of my house. At that moment a voice called out. I asked my servant ‘Is everything alright? Go and see, who is there.’ He went to see and replied, ‘Everything is fine. The vizier’s paternal cousin Hamid b. Muhammad Kaatib’s servant ’.has come

He brought him to me. The servant said to me, ‘The vizier and my master Hamid have called you.’ I mounted my horse and went ahead till I reached the lane of ‘Vazzaneen’ and saw that Hamid was sitting and waiting for me. When he saw me, he advanced towards me and shook hands with me and both of us headed for the vizier’s house. The vizier said to me, ‘O old man! Allah has fulfilled your wish.’ Then he apologised to me (for his past behaviour) and gave me some official papers bearing his seal. I took them and

(came out.(1

Reminder

From the above incident we can gauge the degree of influence that Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) exerted in the court. We can also conclude that Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) was the beneficiary of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) special care and attention, while he had not yet become a special deputy as this incident occurred in ٢٩٨ AH – ٧ years before Muhammad b. 'Uthman's (r.a.) demise, after which Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) assumed special deputyship.

(.Selection of Husain b. Rauh (r.a

More than ٣ years before his own death, Muhammad b. 'Uthman had started directing some of the Shias who were bringing Khums and other monies for Imam (a.t.f.s.) to Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). In this manner he was preparing the ground for the appointment of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) to the position of special deputyship.

If someone raised any doubt or objection to this practice, Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) would affirm that this was on the order of Imam (a.t.f.s.) himself. In this regard, there are several traditions, of which, we narrate just one:

Muhammad b Ali Aswad narrates, 'When some financial donations (waqf) used to be brought to me, I would surrender the same to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) and he used to accept it from me.

Once, during the last days of his life, I took some monies and went to him, but Muhammad b. 'Uthman ordered me to hand over the wealth to Husain b. Rauh (r.a.).

I went to Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) and handed the money to him and asked him for a

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1- Kamaluddin; chapter of Tawqee'aat; pg. ٣٢

receipt. Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) complained about this to Muhammad b. 'Uthman, so Muhammad b. 'Uthman ordered me not to demand a receipt from Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) in future. He stressed, "Whatever wealth you deposit with Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), it is as if you have deposited the same with me." After this incident, I never sought a receipt for any amount deposited with Husain b. Rauh (r.a.).

A similar incident has been narrated by Abu Abdillah Ja'far b. Muhammad Madai famous as 'Ibn Qazooda'. Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) has narrated it in his book 'Al Ghaibah', pg ۳۶۷.

Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) took particular care in appointing Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) as his successor. He endorsed his successorship while he was alone with him, at times in the assemblies of sincere Shias and at other times in front of his representatives.

The reason for adopting such an approach was because there were no clear narrations from the holy Imams (a.s.) about the reliability and the trustworthiness of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Neither the representatives of Baghdad nor the special and common Shias expected the deputyship of Imam (a.t.f.s.) to fall on the relatively unknown and unfamiliar shoulders of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Hence Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) took advantage of every opportunity to impress upon the Shias the deputyship of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.).

Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Qoolwyah relates: 'Our teachers used to say that we had no doubt that after the demise of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.),

none other than Ja'far b. Ahmad b. Muttayal or his father would succeed him. This was because he possessed characteristics similar to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). Also, we were aware that he stayed frequently in his house. In addition to that, in his last days, Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) ate food, which was prepared in the house of Ja'far b. Muttayal and his father or personally visited their house for food.'

There was no doubt whatsoever in the minds of the special Shias that in the case of any eventuality, Ja'far b. Muttayal would succeed Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). However, when Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) appointed Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) as his successor, everyone submitted to him and accepted him and their conduct towards him was like their conduct towards Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). Ja'far b. Muttayal worked in a similar manner (with Husain b. Rauh (r.a.)) as he had worked during the deputyship of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.).

'This is a characteristic of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) chosen servants, whose actions do not alter with the change in personality.'

Ja'far b. Muhammad b. Qoolwayh Qummi says:

'Then whoever speaks evil of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) has in fact maligned Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). Whoever maligns Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.), in reality he has spoken ill about Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and has criticized him (a.t.f.s.).(١)

The abovementioned chronicles underline the fact that some of Muhammad b. 'Uthman's (r.a.) deputies were closer to him than Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) spent

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١- Zindagaani al-Nawwab al-Khaas, pg. ٢۴٣

more time meeting these deputies than he did in meeting Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). This led the Shias to believe that one of these proximate deputies would eventually succeed Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.). Also, it is clear from the previous quotes, that although Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) was subtly appointing Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) as .his successor, this fact was not well-known among the general Shia populace

Abu Ali Muhammad b. Hamala says that before his demise, Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.) gathered the leaders and chiefs of the Shias and announced, ‘After my demise, Husain b. Rauh al-Nawbakhti (r.a.) will be my successor. I have been ordered to appoint him in my place. Therefore, turn towards him and have faith in him regarding (your works.’(١

(.First Tawqee (A Signed Letter) to Husain b. Rauh (r.a

Abul Abbas b. Nuh states that Muhammad b. Nafees wrote a letter from Ahwaz. I read the very first tawqee concerning Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) from Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). :In it was written

We know (Husain b. Rauh), may Allah confer all His Goodness and Pleasure on him‘ and bestow His Bounties on him. We are aware of his letter, which is the cause of our reliance and certainty (upon him). We deem him meritorious, which makes him happy. (May Allah increase His Favours and Goodness on him.’(٢

.This tawqee reached Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) on Sunday, ۶th of Shawwal, ۳۰۵ A.H

The rationale behind the appointment of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) as deputy of Imam :Zaman (a.t.f.s.) can be enumerated as follows

He was appointed as the deputy .۱

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۱, pg. ۳۵۵ -۱

Al Ghaibah of Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.), pg. ۳۷۲, tradition ۳۴۴ -۲

largely due to his faith, intelligence, patience, generosity and sincerity. These qualities were to prove very useful in that political environment so as to stifle jealousy and enmity. There were numerous jurisprudents and theologians in that period and the people had their eyes fixed on them.

۲. He was the wisest among Shias and Sunnis. Also, he had placated the enemies and also pleased his friends. In the last tawqee received by Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) through Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), Imam (a.t.f.s.) asserted,

وَكَانَ اَبُوْ الْقَاسِمِ رحمه اللهِ عليه مِنْ اَعْقَلِ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ الْمُخَالِف وَ الْمَوَافِقِ وَ يَسْتَعْمِلُ الْتَقيَّهَ-

'Abul Qasim (r.a.) is the wisest of the people, for foes and friends and his practises dissimulation (Taqaiyyah).'(۱)

There are numerous incidents of his Taqaiyyah. Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) in his book 'Al Ghaibah' narrates from Abu Nasr Hebatullah b. Muhammad that in the house of Abu Yasaar, the vizier of Muqtadirbillah Abbasi, in the presence of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), there were five Ahle Sunnah scholars discussing the most superior Muslim after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

One of them said: The superior one after Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Ali (a.s.). The other claimed this superiority for Ali (a.s.). Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) solved the problem in a manner placating the Sunnis and also safeguarding the Shias in the process. The people present in that gathering became the adherents of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.).

۳. Another reason for Husain b. Rauh's (r.a.) selection was the possibility of people accusing

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۱- Al Ghaibah, pg. ۳۸۴

Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) of appointing his close relatives according to his own whims and Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) not being involved in the decision. (We have mentioned earlier that Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) was very close to Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) but apparently it seemed that Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) was closer to other (people)(١

Commencement of his Deputyship

After the demise of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.), as per his will, a gathering was organised at Daarul Niyaabah in Baghdad where along with the leaders of Shias, Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh Nawbhakti (r.a.) was present. This incident has been narrated by Sayyid b. Taoos (r.a.) in his book 'Mohajud Daawaat'. After the expiry of Shaikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Sa'eed Amri (r.a.), Shaikh Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh b. Abi Bahr (r.a.) went to the house of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.). A servant named :Zuka of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.) handed over him the following

.Some documents that were wrapped together and a scroll .١

.A staff .٢

.A painted wooden trunk .٣

He took them and said to the inheritors of Muhammad b. 'Uthman (r.a.), 'In this scroll are narrated the sayings of Holy Imams (a.s.).' He opened it and showed them the .(same. It contained supplications and Qunoot of the Infallible (a.s

The inheritors left it and said, 'Certainly the trunk contains gold and jewelry.' Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) asked them whether they would like to sell the trunk to him. Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) signaled Abul Hasan i.e. Ibn Shabeeb al-Kooshari to give them ١٠ dirhams

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Zindagaani al-Nuwwab al-Khaas, pg. ٢٥٢ -١

in exchange for the wooden trunk. They were not satisfied with it. Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) increased it till it reached ۱۰۰ dirhams.

Yet, they were not satisfied with the amount. Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) warned them that if they do not close the deal at that rate they would regret later. On his insistence, they finalised the deal at ۱۰۰ dirhams.

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) put aside the staff and scroll and picked up the trunk. When the matter of the trunk was resolved he explained: This staff belongs to Abu Muhammad Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.). He had given it to Shaikh 'Uthman b. Sa'eed (r.a.) as his will at the time of his death. The staff is still present and regarding the trunk, it contains the rings of the Holy Imams (a.s.). The rings have special characteristics and then he showed it to the people.'(۱)

It is clear from the aforementioned incident that the period of Husain b. Rauh's (r.a.) deputyship was more prominent among the common Shias than the period of the first and the second deputies. Due to this, many Shias directly contacted Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) instead of his deputies in their areas. In his period of deputyship, he witnessed lesser opposition compared to the previous deputies.

Deniers of Deputyship

In the year ۳۰۷ A.H., Muhammad b. Fazl Mosuli denied the deputyship of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). However, with the guidance of Hasan b. Ali Wajnaa and after witnessing some of the affairs of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), he

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۱- Zindagaani Nuwwab al-Khaas, pg. ۲۵۲-۲۵۴

.repented

It is necessary to point out over here that some people have written that Hasan b. Wajnaa rejected the deputyship of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Some have written his name .as Hasan b. Ali Wajnaa and some have recorded it as Husain

In this regard, Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Khu'i (r.a.) in his book 'Mojam-o-Rejaalel-Hadees' vol. ۵, pg. ۱۳۰ has recorded his name as Abu Muhammad Hasan b. Muhammad Wajnaa Nasibi. He has narrated traditions from Imam Hasan al-Askari .(.(a.s.) and he had met Imam az-Zaman (a.s

Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) has included him as the supporter of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.). Hasan Wajnaa was deputy of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) in the area of Nasibeen. He was also writing letters for the people of Egypt. Similarly, Qasim b. Alaa and his two friends Abu Hamid Imran b. Mufleen, Abu Ali Hajdar in Azerbaijan and Muhammad b. Ja'far Asadi were deputies till ۳۱۲ A.H. in the city of Rayy (Teheran). Muhammad b. Hasan Sairafi (was in Balkh. They all were the media between the people and Husain b. Rauh (r.a.).(۱

(.Political Aspect (۲۹۵ – ۳۲۰ A.H

In Muqtadir Abbas's reign, Husain b. Rauh was highly respected by the ministers (Viziers). But he was subsequently arrested in the reign of Muqtadir. Muqtadir donned .the mantle of Caliphate at a very young age

Till the time the post of Vizier was in the family of Furat, Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) had a say in the government's decision-making. But this changed when Hamid b. Abbas, an evil person who thought nothing of abusing people when

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Tarikh al-Siyaasi al-Ghaibat al-Imam al-Devazdahum, pg. ۱۹۶-۱۹۸ -۱

he was angry, became the Vizier. He harassed the family of Furat and the Shias were imprisoned. At that time Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) had to face increased difficulties under .very hostile conditions

The hostility persisted for approximately five years i.e. from Jamaadiul Aakhar ۳۰۶ A.H. till Rabiul Aakhar, ۳۱۱ A.H. During this period, Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) lived a secluded life and his activities were largely clandestine. After the difficult era of Hamid b. Abbas, the conditions of the Shias improved. Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) recommenced his activities openly. In the year ۳۱۴ A.H., the government arrested him. The historians have cited :the following reasons for his arrest

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) was blamed of promoting links with the Qaraameta. He had .۱ written a letter to Abu Tahir Qarameta and invited him to Baghdad so as to lay siege to it. Abu Tahir had attacked pilgrims (Hajis) of Baghdad and imprisoned them. Among .the Hajis were the relatives of Caliph Muqtadir

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) was accused of accepting money from the people. Some have .۲ written that the government had demanded wealth from him, which he refused to .pay

Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) was once again imprisoned in Zilhajj ۳۱۲ A.H. till Mohaaram ۳۱۷ A.H. After being released from prison, he got engrossed in his activities. The conditions improved for him because people from the family of Nawbakht viz. Abu Yaqub Ishaq b. Ismail (killed in ۳۲۲ A.H.), Abu Ali Nawbakhti (۲۴۴ - ۳۲۴ A.H.) and Abu Abdullah Husain b. Ali

.Nawabakhti (d. ٣٢۶ A.H.) were appointed at senior positions in the government

His Knowledge

Indeed what can be said about the knowledge of the one who had unrestricted access to the Proof of Allah (i.e. Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.)) and his bestowals, attention, !care and respect

Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Ishaq Talaqi asked the questions of Ali b. Esa Qasri to Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) that whether Imam Husain (a.s.) was Wali (appointee) of Allah? And whether his killer was enemy of Allah? Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) replied in the .affirmative

Then he was asked whether Allah allows His enemy to overpower His appointee? After receiving the replies, Muhammad b. Ibrahim fell in doubt as he could not digest this subtle point. The next day when he went in the presence of Husain b. Rauh (r.a.), before he could utter anything, Husain b. Rauh (r.a.) exclaimed: 'O Muhammad b. Ibrahim! It would have been better had I fallen from the sky and became a morsel for birds than advance my views concerning Allah's Religion. Whatever I had replied, its (source was the Proof of Allah (i.e. Imam (a.t.f.s.)) and I myself heard this from him.'(١

Husain b. Rauh's (r.a.) discussion with Muhammad b. Ibrahim on Allah's Enemy and His Wali can be summarised in a simple manner. Allah does not converse with the people .openly like we do

Rather, He converses through the Prophets (a.s.), who are mortals. He bestows miracles upon them, which are beyond all others in their respective nations. Despite evident miracles, few

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Isbaatul Hudaat, vol. ١, pg. ١١٧, tradition ١۶٨ -١

people from their nations testified to their claims, while others rejected them outright. So, sometimes Prophets (a.s.) overpower the enemies and sometimes they were .vanquished and confronted with calamities

If Allah made the Prophets (a.s.) defeat all their adversaries in all matters, then the people would have taken them as Allahs and patience, calamities and examination .would have no meaning and purpose

Hence, Allah has conferred characteristics on these mortals that they should be patient at all times be it in comfort or difficulties. In times of ease and triumph (over the enemy) they should thank Allah. They should be humble in all situations and abstain from rebellion and disobedience. In this way, people may understand that (Allah is the Creator and in all affairs, He has some purpose and wisdom.(١

For more details on Husain b. Rauh's (r.a.) knowledge, the following books of :traditions may be referred to

١. Al Ghaibah of Shaikh at-Tusi (a.r.) - pg. ٣٩٠ tradition ٣٥۶, pg. ٣٧٨, tradition ٣۴۶ and pg ٣٧٣, tradition ٣۴۵

٢. Kamaluddin of Shaikh Saduq (a.r.) - Vol. ٢, pg. ٥١٩, tradition ۴٨

٣. Bihar al-Anwar of Allama Majlisi (a.r.) - Vol. ٥٣, pg. ١٩٢, tradition ٢٠

The aforementioned volumes of Kamaluddin and Behaarul Anwar have been .translated into Urdu

Miracles and Manifestations

There are many incidents that highlight the abovementioned traits of which we are :narrating only two

١. Husain b. Ali Babawayah (r.a.) (brother of Shaikh Saduq (r.a.)) narrates:

Some people from the city of Qum (in ٣١١ A.H.), prepared to go for Hajj, when the Qaraamatah attacked the Hajis. My father (Ali

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Zindagaani al-Nuwwab al-Khaas, pg. ۲۶۵ -۱

b. Babawayah (r.a.)) wrote a letter to Shaikh Abul Qasim Husain b. Rauh Nawbakhti (r.a.) to present it to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and seek permission for Hajj that year. Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) ordered him not to go for Hajj. My father wrote another letter saying that the Hajj was obligatory and whether it is permissible to stay away from it? Imam (a.t.f.s.) replied: ‘If you cannot avoid it, then travel with the last ’.caravan

As my father left for Hajj with the last caravan, he was saved while the people with (the earlier caravan were killed.(١

When Ahmed b. Ishaq Qummi requested for permission to go for Hajj, Husain b. .٢ Rauh (r.a.) granted him permission and gave him a cloth. When Ahmed b. Ishaq saw the cloth, he exclaimed, “This is the news of my death.” On his return from Hajj, he (expired at a place called Halwaan.(٢

His Demise

He was appointed as a deputy in the year ٣٠۵ A.H. and departed from this transitory world in the year ٣٢۶ A.H. He served as a direct deputy of Imam (a.t.f.s.) for ٢١ years. If we add another ٢-٣ years, during which he served as a deputy during the deputyship .of Muhammad b. ‘Uthman (r.a.), it adds upto ٢٣ years

His grave is situated in Baghdad in Nawbakhtia, near the door of the house of Ali b. Ahmad Nawbhakti. He expired on Wednesday, ١٨ Shabaan, ٣٢۶ A.H. His grave is still .there. However, the place is now known as Suq Al-Attaareen

Visitors should not forsake the

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵١, pg. ٢٩٣, tradition ١ -١

Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۵١, pg. ٣٠۶, tradition ٢١ -٢

visitation of this great deputy of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) when they visit Kazimain for Ziarat. Nowadays, the caravan of visitors do not visit his grave due to the stringent traffic system of Baghdad. However, his Ziarat can be done on Fridays, which is a .holiday in Baghdad

(.The Fourth Special Deputy: Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a

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Name : Ali

Agnomen (Kuniyyat): Abul Hasan

Father : Muhammad

The fourth deputy of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad (r.a.) attained this special position after Husain Ibn Rauh Naubakhti (r.a.). Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) himself ordered Abul Qasim Ibn Rauh Naubakhti (r.a.) to appoint him to this .post

The Samaris were among those Shia families that were highly respected for their services to Islam in general and the Shiite cause in particular. Hence, his appointment as the fourth deputy was undisputed. Many individuals from this family like Hasan, the son of Ismail Ibn Saleh and Muhammad, the son of Ali Ibn Ziyad were owners of large estates. They had gifted the income from their estates to the eleventh Imam Imam (Hasan al-Askari (a.s.).(١

Apart from this, some members of Samari family were amongst the supporters of Imam Reza (a.s.). In this way, some of the companions of other Imams (a.s.) also belonged to this family. For example, Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ziyad served as a .(.representative of Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) and Imam Hasan Al-al-Askari (a.s

He also wrote a book 'Al-Awsiyaa' in which he clarified doubts on the Imamate of the twelfth Imam (a.s.). The respected Sayyid Ibn Taawoos (r.a.) has made a mention of this book on

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۱- Pazoohash al-Peiramoon al-Zindegaani al-Nuwwaab al-Khaas al-Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), p. ۳۰۴

page number ۴۲۷ of his highly acclaimed work, 'Mohaj al-Da'waat' (p. ۴۲۸ of the new edition with Persian translation).

Sayyid Ibn Taawoos (r.a.) has brought two incidents from the book 'Al-Awsiyaa' that describe the end of the Abbaside Caliphs Mo'tasim and Motazid, the murderers of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.).

In the same manner, we find that Ali Ibn Ziyad wrote a letter to Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) seeking a shroud from him (a.f.t.s.). Imam (a.s.) replied,

'You will require this only at the age of ۸۰ (i.e. in ۲۷۰ AH).'

Ali Ibn Ziyad passed away in the year ۲۷۰ AH and a few days prior to his demise, Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) fulfilled his request.(۱)

These few incidents are sufficient to exemplify the importance, nobility and dignity of the members of Samari family. Their illustrious position does not come as a surprise given that over the years, they were active supporters and helpers of the cause of the holy Imams (a.s.).

The Title of the Fourth Deputy

There exists a difference of opinion in the title of the fourth deputy from the aspects of pronunciation and writing. The respected Ali Ghaffarzaadeh, while providing references from learned scholars, has concluded his research on this topic as follows. He says, "His title was سَمَرِی (Samari) or سَیْمُری (Saimori) or سَمُرِی (Samori)."

In this regard, he records that in Al-Ghaibah of Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.), Kamaaluddin of Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.), Al-Kharaaej of Qutbuddin al-Raawandi (r.a.) and other authentic books, the title has come with سَمَرِی. There is little doubt in the fact that in books of

۱- Kamaaluddin, vol. ۲, pp. ۵۰۱-۲

.are few and far between سَيْمَرِیْ or سَيْمُرِیْ traditions and narrators, references to

Some of the fourth deputy's contemporaries while recording the events of his life have written his title as سَیْمُری, while some have recorded it as سَیْمَری. The title سَیْمَری is more acceptable and appears more likely vis-vis other titles. This is because between Basraa and Waasit, there is a place called سَیْمَر and Aqa Buzurg al-Tehrani (r.a.) has recorded the name with سَمَرِی.(۱)

.سَمَرِیْ In short, the title of the fourth deputy was

The Period of the Fourth Deputy

The period of Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) is remembered as one in which the oppressions and tyrannies of the ruling Abbaside government were at its peak. Consequently, like his predecessors, socially he was not very active and had .deliberately limited his interaction with his representatives

However, despite these constraints, he maintained contact with the Shias. In fact, he continued to enjoy the same respect and position amongst the Shias as the preceding three special deputies. It was for this reason that the Shias continued to send their .religious financial taxes to him through his representatives

The details of his date of birth and life history are few and far in books of history. Nonetheless, the relatively short span of his appointment as special deputy of Imam .az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) has been reported with regular frequency in books

(.Ali Ibn Muhammad, A Companion of Imam Hasan al-Askari (A.S

The venerated Shaikh at-Tusi (a.r.) in his book 'Al-Rejaal' (p. ۴۳۲) has regarded Ali Ibn .(.Muhammad Samari (r.a.) amongst the companions of Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s

Apparently, Imam Hasan Al-al-Askari (a.s.) also

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۱ - Pazoohash al-Peiramoon al-Zindagaani al-Nuwwaab al-Khaas al-Imam al-

Zamana (a.t.f.s.), p. ۳۰۵

corresponded with him through letters. For example, Ali Ibn Muhammad says that on ,one occasion, Imam Hasan Al-al-Askari (a.s.) wrote to him

A dispute will soon arise which will trouble you such that you will lose your hands and‘ ’.feet. Remain alert of this corruption and safeguard yourself from it

After three days, Bani Hashim were involved in an incident due to which they were engulfed with hardships and sufferings. I wrote to Imam Hasan Al-al-Askari (a.s.) enquiring whether this was the same incident which he had referred to in his letter. He ,replied

’.No, there is yet another incident. You protect yourself completely from it‘

(After a few days, we were informed of the murder of the Abbside caliph Mo’taz. (١

.(.This letter shows that he was in contact with Imam Hasan Al-al-Askari (a.s

(.News of The Unseen: Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a

Like his predecessors, many incidents of nobility are reported about Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.). These incidents served a dual purpose. Firstly, they established the strong relationship between him and Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and secondly, the Shias who witnessed these noble actions never harboured any doubt .(.about his designation as the special deputy of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) based on reports from his teachers, narrates an incident from Husain Ibn Ali Ibn Babwayh Qummi (r.a.) - brother of Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.). He reports, ‘Some members of Qum which included Imran Saffaar, Alawiyyah Saffaar and Husain Ibn Ahmad Ibn Idrees (may Allah have mercy upon them) reported to me that in the year in which my father Ali Ibn

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١ - Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. ٣, p. ٢٠٧, Pazoohash al-Peiramoon al-Zindagaani al- Nuwwaab al-Khaas al-Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.), p. ٣٠۴

Husain Ibn Musa Ibn Babwayh (the father of Shaikh Sadooq- r.a.) passed away, they .were present in Baghdad

They report that Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) asked each one of us about the health of Ali Ibn Babwayh and we replied to him that we have received a letter from him that he is fine. Till the time of his death, he kept enquiring about Ali Ibn Babwayh and we kept replying that he was well. One day, he (Ali Ibn 'Muhammad Samari) asked us the same question and we replied that we had not received the reply to our letter from him. To this, he said, 'May Allah grant you patience on his demise'!

We noted the day, month and time of his statement. After about seventeen or eighteen days, we received the news of the death of Ali Ibn Muhammad Babwayh and it was at exactly the same day and time when Abul Hasan Samari (r.a.) had paid condolence to us.(١)

Shaikh Sadooq (r.a.) heard this incident about his father ١٠ years after his demise through reports from Abul Hasan Saleh Ibn Shu'aib Taleqani. Taleqani reported this incident from Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim Mukhallad who heard Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) say,

رَحِمَ اللهُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ بنِ مُوسیٰ بنِ بَابوَیه القمی

'May Allah have mercy upon Ali Ibn Husain Ibn Musa Ibn Babwayh Qummi.'(٢)

The Last Tawqee'

The last Tauqee' that was issued during the Minor Occultation (Minor Occultation (غیبتِ صغری) bore tremendous historical import. Not only did this letter declare the conclusion of the

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١- Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. ٥١, p. ١۶٣, tradition ٨, from Al-Ghaibah of Shaikh at-at-Tusi (r.a.).

٢- Kamaaluddin, vol. ٢, p. ٣٠۵, tradition ٢٣

era of special deputies and herald the onset of Major Occultation (Ghaibat al-Kubra), .but it also carried with it a profound and deep rooted message

This letter was issued by Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) six days before the demise of the fourth deputy and can be found with minor variations in the books of traditions. Prior to his death, Janab Ali bin Muhammad Samari (r.a.) was asked about his successor. In :reply to this question, he placed the following letter before the people

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يَا عَلِيَّ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ السَّمرِیّ، اَعْظَمَ اللهُ اَجْرَ اِخْوَانِکَ فِيْکَ فَاِنَّکَ مَيِّتٌ مَا بَيْنَکَ وَ بَيْنَ سِتَّةِ اَيَّام، فَاجْمَعْ اَمْرَکَ وَلَا تُوصِ اِلٰی اَحَدٍ فَيَقُوْمَ مَقَامَکَ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِکَ فَقَدْ وَقَعَتِ الْغَيْبَةُ التَّامَّةُ فَلَا ظُهُوْرَ اِلَّا بَعْدَ اِذْنِ اللهِ تَعَالٰی ذِکْرُهُ وَ ذَالِکَ بَعْدَ طُوْلِ الْاَمَدِ وَ قَسْوَهِ الْقُلُوْبِ وَامْتِلَاءِ الْاَرْضِ جَوْراً وَ سَيَأتِی شِيْعَتِیْ مَنْ يَدَّعِی الْمُشَاهَدَهَ اَلَا فَمَنِ ادَّعیَ الْمُشَاهَدَهَ قَبْلَ خُرُوْجِ السُّفْيَانِیّ وَ الصَّيْحَهِ فَهُوَ کَذَّابٌ مُفْتَرٌ وَ لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّهَ اِلَّا بِاللهِ الْعَلِیِّ الْعَظِيْمِ-

O Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari! May Allah increase the reward of your brothers' concerning you (i.e. your demise)! Death will come to you within the next six days. So you complete your works and do not nominate any person after you. The sequence of special deputies will come to an end and the Major Occultation (غیبت کبری) will .commence with your demise

Now the reappearance will occur only with the permission of Allah, after a prolonged period and after the hearts of people are hardened. And such a

period will emerge on my Shias when people will claim that they have seen me. Whoever makes such a claim before the advent of Sufyani and the heavenly voice, is a liar, an impostor. There is no strength and power save that of Allah, the High, the ".Great

As stated above, when the people enquired from Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) about his successor, he advanced this letter unto them. Shaikh Tabarsi (r.a.) narrates that some of these people noted down the contents of the letter and left. They returned on the sixth day and found Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari in a state of illness, ,grappling with death pangs. They enquired once again

مَنْ وَصِیُّکَ مِنْ بَعْدِکَ؟

,Who is your successor?' He replied'

لِلَّهِ اَمْرٌ هُوَ بَالِغُه

'.To Allah belongs the affair (of succession), He will fulfill it'

.These were the last words of his life

:'One can refer to the following books for this Tawqee

Al Ghaybah by Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.), p. ۵۹۳; Kamaaluddin vol. ۲, p. ۶۱۵; Al Ehtejaaj, vol. ۲, p. ۸۷۴; Bihar al-Anwar vol. ۵۱, p. ۶۳, vol. ۲۵, p. ۱۵۱ and vol. ۳۵, p. ۸۱۳; E'laamul Waraa' p. ۷۱۴; Yaumul Khalaas (Persian tr.) vol. ۱, p. ۴۰۳; Ayanush Shiah (Persian tr.) p. ۵۵; .Muntakhabul Asar (Old Edn.) p. ۹۹۳; Yanaabiul Mawaddah (Urdu) p. ۵۱۷

'Analysis of The Tawqee

A meaningful investigation of the above Tauqee' indicates that Imam (a.t.f.s.) has drawn the attention of Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) towards various important aspects. Apart from this, this Tauqee' is also a conclusive proof of the existence of

.the Imam (a.t.f.s.) for those who deny it and ridicule the Shias for it

:Some of these aspects are noted here

1. The prophecy made by Imam (a.t.f.s.) about the demise of Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) within six days. The accuracy of the prophecy proved that the Tauqee' .(.was issued from none other than Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s

2. Imam (a.t.f.s.) ordered Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) not to appoint any person as his successor. With this decree, Imam (a.t.f.s.) sealed the only door for all to meet him directly. The decree was a pointer to the fact that in the future (during the Major Occultation), none would be able to meet Imam (a.t.f.s.) as and when he pleased. It also implies that there would be no 'designated' special deputy during the Major .Occultation, thus falsifying any claimant to that position

3. .The Tawqee' marked the commencement of the Major Occultation

4. .Imam (a.t.f.s.) will not reappear but with the permission of Allah

5. It made it abundantly clear that any person who claimed to meet or to be able to .meet Imam (a.t.f.s.) at will would be a liar, an impostor

An Objection

There is a seeming contradiction in the Tawqee'. On one hand we see that if a person claims to meet Imam az-Zaman (a.s.), he is a liar. However, on the other hand, there are numerous incidents and events reported in books where not only scholars, but .also ordinary people have met Imam (a.t.f.s.) and have reported such meetings

Reply

Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has replied to the above objection at two places in

his book, Bihar al-Anwar. His reply is beneficial even to the scholars after him. We :clarify his position on the above issue as follows

As reported by illustrious scholars, one reason could be that the one who claims to .۱ have met Imam (a.t.f.s.) would use this claim to place himself as a special deputy and cheat the people. Since there are several incidents of people having met Imam (a.t.f.s.), it is clear that the scholars believe that the Tawqee’ does not reject the possibility of meeting and seeing Imam (a.t.f.s.), it only rejects the appointment of a .(.special deputy after Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a

It is also possible that the one who contends to be able to see Imam (a.t.f.s.) is a liar .۲ and an impostor if he maintains that he can get a meeting with Imam (a.t.f.s.) at will. Anyone who makes such a preposterous claim in the Major Occultation is a pretender .and deserves to be snubbed

So, meeting Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not rejected outright in the Tawqee’. It is just that in the Major Occultation, meeting Imam (a.t.f.s.) voluntarily is not possible. Rather Imam (a.t.f.s.) will meet whosoever he wants and hence, the choice of the meeting lies with .Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) and not with the people

The Conclusion of the Chain of Special Deputies

Ayatullah Baqar Al-Sadr (r.a.), writes, “The transformation of the Minor Occultation into the Major Occultation signifies that the objectives and aims of the Minor .Occultation had been adequately fulfilled

This elaborate programme protected the Shias from the difficulties arising from

the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.) and gradually, they made a mental shift from the special deputies and accustomed themselves to referring their religious matters to .the scholars

Thus the responsibility to represent the Imam (a.t.f.s.) in the Major Occultation fell upon the just, religious jurisprudents and it became obligatory for the people to follow ".their rulings in worldly as well as religious matters

This viewpoint is endorsed by the famous tradition of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) which ,is regularly quoted

اَمَّا الْحَوَادِثُ الْوَاقِعَهُ فَارْجِعُوْا فِيْهَا اِلٰى رُوَاهِ حَدِيْثِنَا فِاِنَّهُمْ حُجَّتِىْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ اَنا حُجَّهُ اللهِ

'If any fresh incident occurs (in matters of religious issues), then refer them to the narrators of our traditions. For surely, they are my proofs upon you and I am Allah's (Proof.'(١

This tradition is attributed to a Tawqee' issued to the second special deputy Muhammad Ibn 'Uthman Al Amri (r.a.) and many traditionalists have quoted it as such. However, the author of 'Yaumul Khalaas', Kaamel Sulaymani has credited this tradition to the last days of the Minor Occultation and has attributed it to the fourth (deputy Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.).(٢

Note

It is possible that the tradition may have been reported twice and there is nothing wrong with that. We can understand clearly that the unmistakable message in the tradition is towards the solution of issues and dilemmas that would arise during the .Major Occultation

The Conclusion of the Chain of Special Deputies

The fourth special deputy passed away on ١٥th Shabaan, ٣٢٩ AH. His demise was accurately prophesied by Imam (a.t.f.s.) in his Tauqee' wherein he informed him

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥٣, p. ١٨٠ narrating from al-Ehtejaaj

٢- Yaumul Khalaas (Persian tr.) vol.١, p. ٣٠٣

.of his death within six days

The period of his deputyship lasted for approximately ۳ years from ۳۲۶ AH to ۳۲۹ AH. .His age coincided with the reign of two Abbaside caliphs - Al-Raazi Billah and Muttaqi

His Grave

Shaikh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) writes in vol. ۶, p. ۲۳۴ of his renowned book 'Safinatul Behaar', 'The illustrious Shaikh Ali Ibn Muhammad Samari (r.a.) was the successor to Husain Ibn Rauh (r.a.) and shouldered the responsibilities of deputyship for a period of ۳ years. He passed away in the year ۳۲۹ A.H., marking the onset of the Major '.(.Occultation. His grave is in Baghdad near the tomb of Shaikh Kulaini (r.a

Shaikh at-Tusi (r.a.) records that his grave is in Baghdad at the Khalatji Road off the Abu Etaab river. Nowadays this area is more popular as Sooqul Kutub which is on the .eastern bank of the river Dajlah

For centuries, lovers of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) have been visiting his grave and :reciting salutations

اَلسَّلَام عَلَيكَ يا عَلىَّ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّكَ بَابُ الْمَوْلىٰ اَدَّيْتَ عَنْهُ وَ اَدَّيْتَ اِلَيْهِ

Peace be upon you, O Ali Ibn Muhammad. I bear witness that you are the door to our' Master (Imam (a.t.f.s.)). Certainly you fulfilled the trust presented to you by Imam '.(.(a.t.f.s.) and returned the trust to him (a.t.f.s

The Protectors of Wilayat

Criticizing the scholars has always been a pastime among the masses. Whenever there is a discussion related to them, everybody has something to say against them. .Each one has a few 'interesting' anecdotes to narrate

In fact, some people feel

that it is their inherent right to criticize them and consider this as a scholarly act. Perhaps they ignore the fact that in this world (with the exception of the infallible Prophets (a.s.) and the Imams (a.s.)) there are several groups of people - good as well .as bad

There are traders, workers, laborers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, students, etc, and each of these has categories of good and bad individuals. In a market we find the original as well as the imitation. The solution to this problem is not criticism but to define a yardstick so as to differentiate the original from the imposter. At this point in .time, we may not be able to purge all the evils from society

Therefore, in order to safeguard ourselves from deception, it is necessary that we act with foresight and devise a benchmark to distinguish good from evil. With a reliable .yardstick, we can easily sidestep the perils

When we glance at Islamic history, we find scholars emanating radiance, who held nothing back in their endeavors to serve the infallible Imams (a.s.). If it weren't for the most people would have deviated from ,(ولایت) illustrious defenders of the mastership .the true religion

:Imam Ali Naqi (a.s.) says regarding such scholars

If in the occultation of our Qa'im (a.t.f.s.), such scholars would not have been there' who would invite the people towards their Imam and guided them towards him; if they would have not protected Allah's Religion with the help of irrefutable divine proofs and

rescued the weak followers of Allah's religion from Satanic plots, released them from the traps of the mischief mongers and those antagonistic to the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) (ناصبی), then surely all the people would have become apostates (مرتدّ) i.e. they would have deviated from the religion. But these are the people who protect the weak Shias just as a captain protects his ship. These people enjoy the greatest position in front of Allah.(۱)

After the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), nay, right from the time when the people were sure that Allah had chosen the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) to succeed the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for guidance and that there is no say for anyone else in it, people started devising different ways to deviate the Muslims from the right path.

During the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), their clandestine plans remained restricted to their hearts and were not reflected in their tongues and actions. But immediately after his (s.a.w.a.) martyrdom, their schemes unfolded and were manifested. This fact is evident if we ponder over the incident of Saqifah. The entire episode was not a twist of fate but was staged to hide the plots behind them.

During the life of the infallible guides (a.s.), doubts were raised and in every era scholars were present who countered such doubts and guided the seekers of truth to the right path. Among the notable defenders of the Mastership of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) were Salman (r.a.), Abu Zar (r.a.), Ammar al-Yaasir (r.a.), Meesam al-Tammar

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲, p. ۶, tradition ۱۲

r.a.), Rushaid al-Hujri (r.a.), Hujr b. Adi (r.a.), Zuraarah (r.a.), Mu'min al-Taaq (r.a.),) .Hisham b. Hakam (r.a.), Fazl b. Shaazan (r.a.), to name a few

In the year ۲۶۰ AH., Imam Hasan al-Askari (a.s.) was martyred and the minor occultation of Imam al-Asr (a.s.) commenced. Due to the conduct of the people towards Imams (a.s.), the sun of Imamat disappeared behind the clouds of .occultation

At that time, different types of people grabbed the opportunity and reared their ugly heads to fill the void left by Imam's (a.t.f.s.) concealment. They thought that as Imam (a.t.f.s.) was in occultation, their paths were clear and the Shias were defenseless, as .the source of divine knowledge had been severed

However, they erred in their belief that the occultation of Imam (a.t.f.s.) marked the end of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) contact with the Shias. Certainly the relation continued, only the mode of leadership and guidance changed. The difference in leadership and guidance is for those who believe in limits and restrictions. However, there is no difference for the one who has control over the era and for whom the whole universe is like a coin on the palm. In reality, the source of divine knowledge and recognition is .continuing, it depends on the acquirer and how he benefits from it

In the epoch of occultation, the world was never bereft of pure, ethical and sincere scholars, nor will it be deprived of such personalities in the future. Ameerul Momineen Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) in one of

:his sermons said

Lord, I know that knowledge will not be erased, its sources will not discontinue' altogether and You will not leave Your earth without Your Proof. The Proof who lives among the people being well known but disobeyed or he is afraid and hidden. You will never keep the earth void of Your Proof otherwise Your Signs will be invalidated and '.Your Friends would be misled after You have granted them guidance

(from here the discussion of scholars commences)

Where are they and how many are they? They are very few in number but are of' great position before Allah, the Majestic. They follow the Holy Imams (a.s.). (They follow) the guiding leaders (Imams (a.s.)), establish in themselves the discipline of the Imams (a.s.) and practice their way of life. In such conditions, knowledge will lead them to the true faith and their souls then accept the call of the leaders of knowledge. The traditions of the Imams (a.s.) that are difficult for others, are easy for them to .understand

Traditions concerning the virtues, mastership and obedience of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and) especially the traditions about Wilayat al-Takweeni as well as Tashreei of Ahlul Bayt (.(a.s.), which their opponents deny, are easily accepted by the scholars

These scholars acknowledge that following and obeying the Holy Imams (a.s.) is obligatory like following and obeying Allah. They are friends of Allah. They are in because of the fear of enemies. Their pure souls have reached a (تقیّه) dissimulation lofty position i.e. physically they

are among the people but spiritually they are away from them. The scholars are hidden and silent in the oppressive government and are awaiting the divine kingdom. .Allah will soon establish truth with His Words and banish falsehood

Glad tidings to them for their patience and forbearance in the period of occultation. I desire to see them in the era of reappearance. May Allah soon bring us together with them in Paradise along with their pious parents, spouses and children.(١)

Please reflect on this tradition considering the era when there was attack on religious beliefs from all sides and restrictions were imposed on revealing one's creed. .Government restrictions were the order of the day. Facilities were few

To search just one tradition; enormous traveling had to be undertaken. Electricity was an unthinkable concept then. To hunt books and manuscripts entailed immense struggle and perseverance. Also, the books of the bygone era were unlike the present books, which are far neater, more comprehensive and in very good print condition. The layout of old books was such that it was difficult to distinguish between .paragraphs

Moreover, the pages of the books were also not numbered so searching for references and studying them was a frightful task. Keeping in mind the difficulties of the past, we are spellbound when we see the researches of the scholars, their replies .to opponents and the references collected

When we see the number of books written, our intellects fail to comprehend as to when these scholars were studying, when

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١- Al-Kaafi, Kitabul Hujjah

they found the time to rest and when they got down to writing. Also, these scholars were not confined to simply studying and writing in one isolated corner of the house. Rather, they were socially active and were in the forefront in solving the difficulties of .the people

The only conclusion that comes to our mind is that all success (taufiqaat) is from Allah and the special attention of the Imams (a.s.). Due to this even Ameerul Momineen (.(a.s.) desired to see these scholars. It is narrated about Shaikh Mufid (r.a

ما کان ینام من اللیل اِلاَّ هجه ثم یقوم یُصَلّی او یطالع او یدرس او یتلو القرآن

He slept in the night for a short period. Then he got up and prayed or he studied or‘ (took his class or taught the Quran.’(۱

:Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) said

Our Shia scholars are facing the attacks of Satan. They are replying to objections of‘ Satan and his followers. They are protecting the weak Shias from the attacks of ’.from overpowering the Shias (ناصبی) Satan. They have immobilized the enemies

Indeed, whosoever from our Shias reaches this position; he is superior to the soldiers‘ who are fighting the Romans and Turks by a million grades. This is because the scholars are protecting the religion of our friends whereas the soldiers are protecting (the physical boundaries.’(۲

The above tradition illustrates the position and worth of the scholars who are protecting the religion of the Shias and imparting religious teachings. They are protecting the weak friends of Ahlul

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Tahzeebul Ahkaam, Preface, pp. ۳۲ ۳۳ -۱

Al-Ehtejaaj of Shaikh Tabarsi (r.a.), pg. ۸ -۲

.Bayt (a.s.) from the objections and doubts of enemies

The appearance of the Satan's attacks and his followers has changed over a period of time, but their aim is same i.e. to keep Shias away from religion. Keeping away from religion not only implies that a person becomes irreligious but it also means that even after possessing a religious background, he does not fulfill his religious duties and responsibilities nor does he have a sense of accountability towards it. The aim is to make the Shias soulless whereby even after watching the degradation and destruction in the society, he does not feel his religious responsibility to take up the .cause

Whatever religious fervour that we observe in the society is the result of the endeavours of the scholars. A lot more still needs to be done. We have to still traverse .a long distance

The Imam of the time is the medium and mercy between Allah and His creation. The bounties that we are receiving from Allah are through the medium of Imam (a.t.f.s.). :This reality is well-highlighted in Ziaarat al-Jaameah in the following verses

بِكُمْ فَتَحَ اللهُ وَ بِكُمْ يَخْتِمُ وَ بِكُمْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَ بِكُمْ يُمْسِكُ السَّمَآءَ اَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِه وَ بِكُمْ يُنَفِّسُ الْهَمَّ-

Allah has initiated creation through you and through you, He will end it. Through you," He sends down rain and because of you, the sky does not fall on the earth. And ".because of you sorrow is relieved

Besides this Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s) has pointed

:(.towards his special attention in his Tauqee’ (a signed letter) to Shaikh al-Mufid (r.a

اِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِيْنَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَ لاَ نَاسِيْنَ لِذِكْرِكُمْ وَ لَوْلاَ ذٰلِكَ لَنَزَلَتْ بِكُمُ اللَّاوَاءُ وَ اصْطَلَمَتْكُمُ الْاَعْدَاءُ

Surely we are not negligent of your protection nor are we forgetful of your“ remembrance. If it was so, calamities would have surrounded you and enemies would (have crushed you.”(۱)

It is due to the grace of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.) that today Shias are protected from most of the calamities. However, whatever little calamities and difficulties we encounter have some divine wisdom behind it. One of the main reasons for these calamities is that due to them we are awake, alert and active. But for the calamities, .we would have become negligent

The scholars have been blessed with the special attention of Imam az-Zaman (a.t.f.s.). On some occasions these blessings are apparent. Such apparent blessings have been recorded in books. However, many of these bounties are ignored and neglected. This is because Imam (a.t.f.s.) is not a worldly leader who chases publicity and wants to be .in the limelight

In this regard, numerous books have been written wherein the meetings of Imam (a.t.f.s.) with the scholars have been recorded. It is very clear that propagation of Shiaism, protection and safeguarding of mastership of Imam al-Asr (a.t.f.s.) is only .possible because of his special attention

However, a complete book has not yet been written on this topic. If someone takes up this topic and compiles the authentic incidents of Imam’s (a.t.f.s.) favors, it will

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Al-Ehtejaaj, vol. ۲, pg. ۳۲۳ -۱

be a great effort in the way of Islam. Its reward will be manifold. It will become a path through which the attention of people will be drawn towards Imam (a.t.f.s.) and pave .the way for them to take Imam (a.t.f.s.) as a medium

We conclude with an incident, which exemplifies the blessings of Imam (a.t.f.s.) on the Shias. When the son of Ayatullah Sayyid Abul Hasan Isfahaani (r.a.) was martyred, he decided to stay away from the leadership of the society. At that time Imam (a.t.f.s.) sent a message to him through Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen al Haaj Shaikh :(Muhammad Kufi Shustari (who had performed ۴۰ Hajj

قُلْ لَهُ اَرْخِصْ نَفْسَکَ وَاجْعَلْ مَجْلِسَکَ فِیْ الدَّهْلِیْزِ وَاقْضِ حَوَائِجَ النَّاسِ نَحْنُ نَنْصُرُکَ

Say to him, 'Make yourself available (to the common people). And conduct your" gatherings in the drawing room (of your house). And fulfill the needs of the people. We (will help you."(۱

We will help you' needs to be highlighted. If' (توقیع) 'The last sentence of this Tawqee someone fulfills or takes one step in fulfilling the needs of the Shias, either material or .spiritual, Imam (a.t.f.s.) will definitely help him

May Allah give us Taufeeq to do such work which becomes the cause of Imam al-!Asr's (a.t.f.s.) help and support for us

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Inaayat al-Hazrat Mahdi be Ulama wa Maraaje' Taqleed, p. ۱۱۰ -۱

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

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Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

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Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

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Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

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Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and-English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,-WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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